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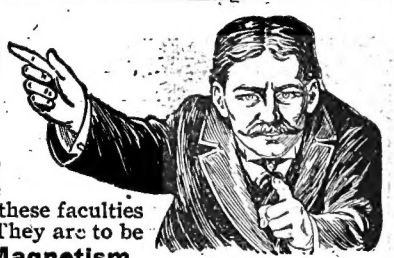

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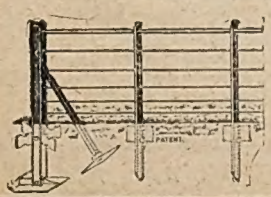

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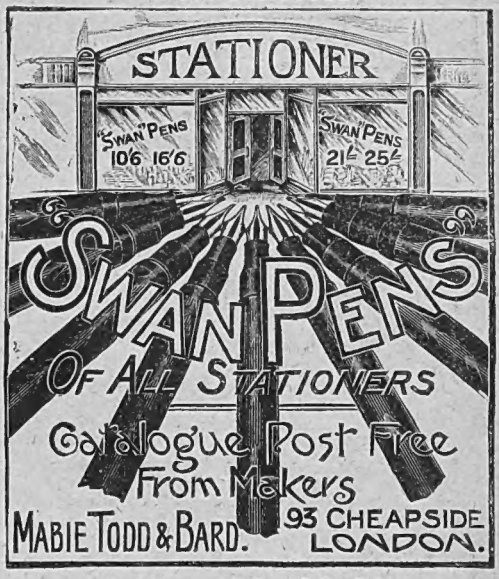

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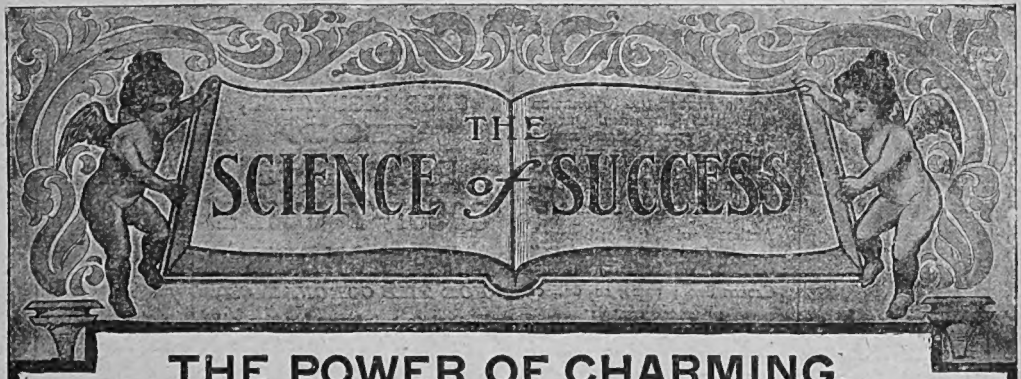

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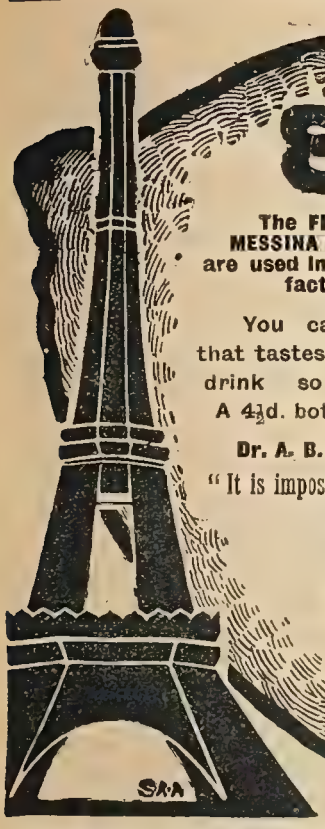

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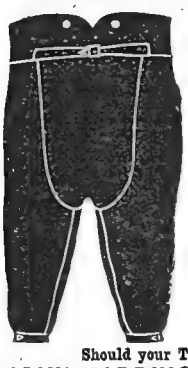

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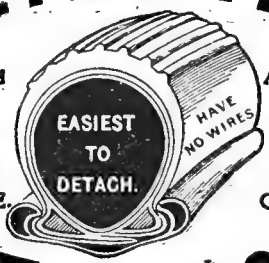

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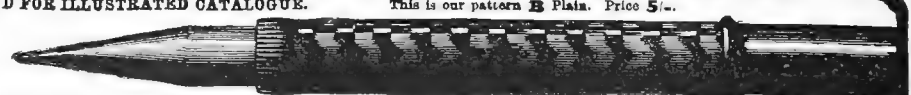

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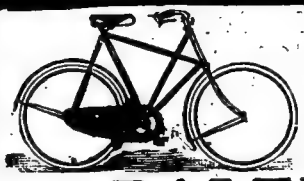

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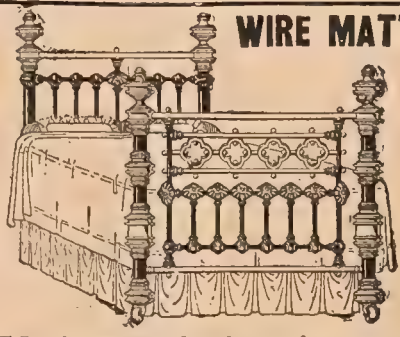

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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The original drawings in this Number are on sale on application to the Editor.

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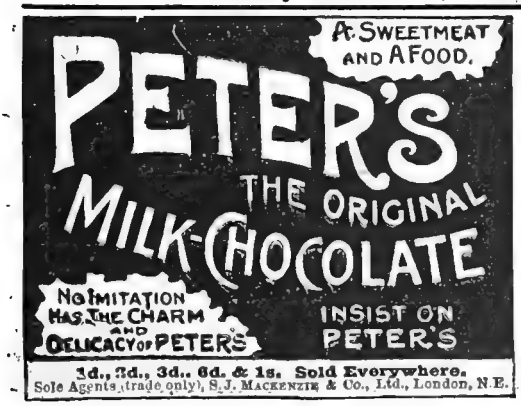
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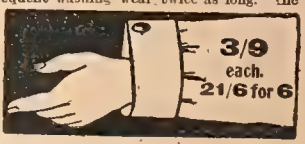

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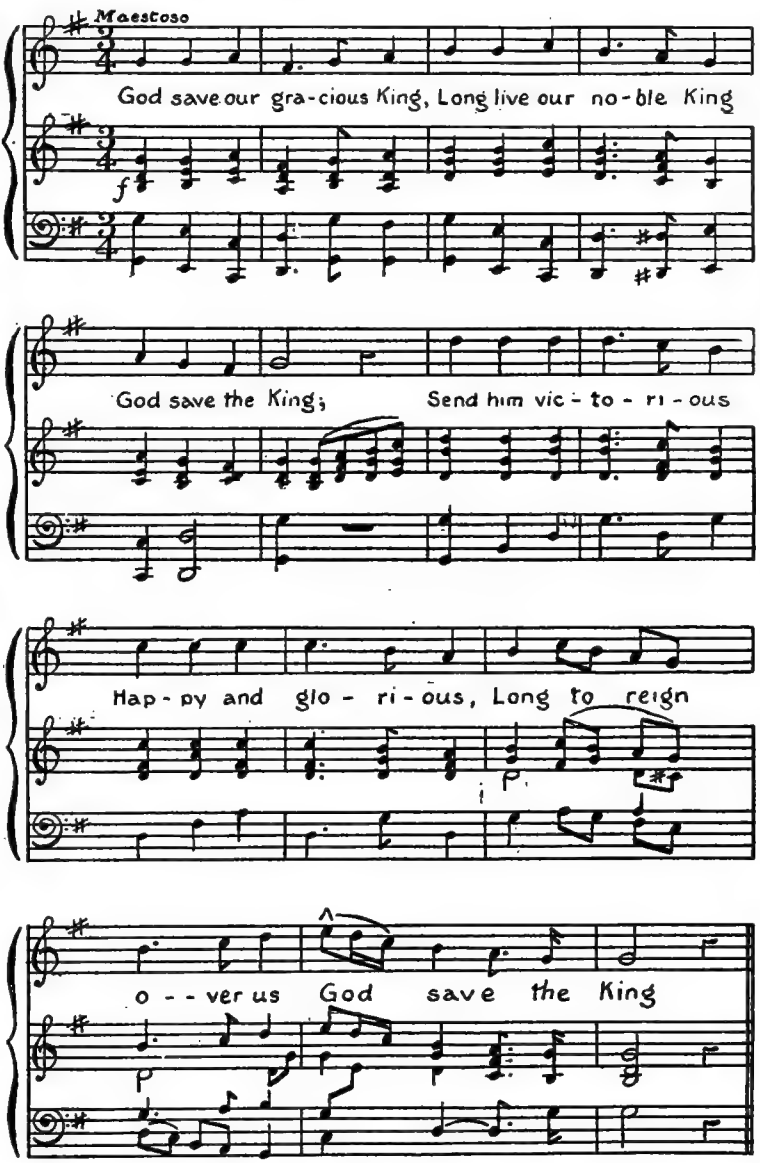
Maestoso
God save our gra-cious King, Long live our no-ble King
f
God save the King; Send him vic-to-ri-ous
Hap-py and glo-ri-ous, Long to reign
o--ver us God save the King

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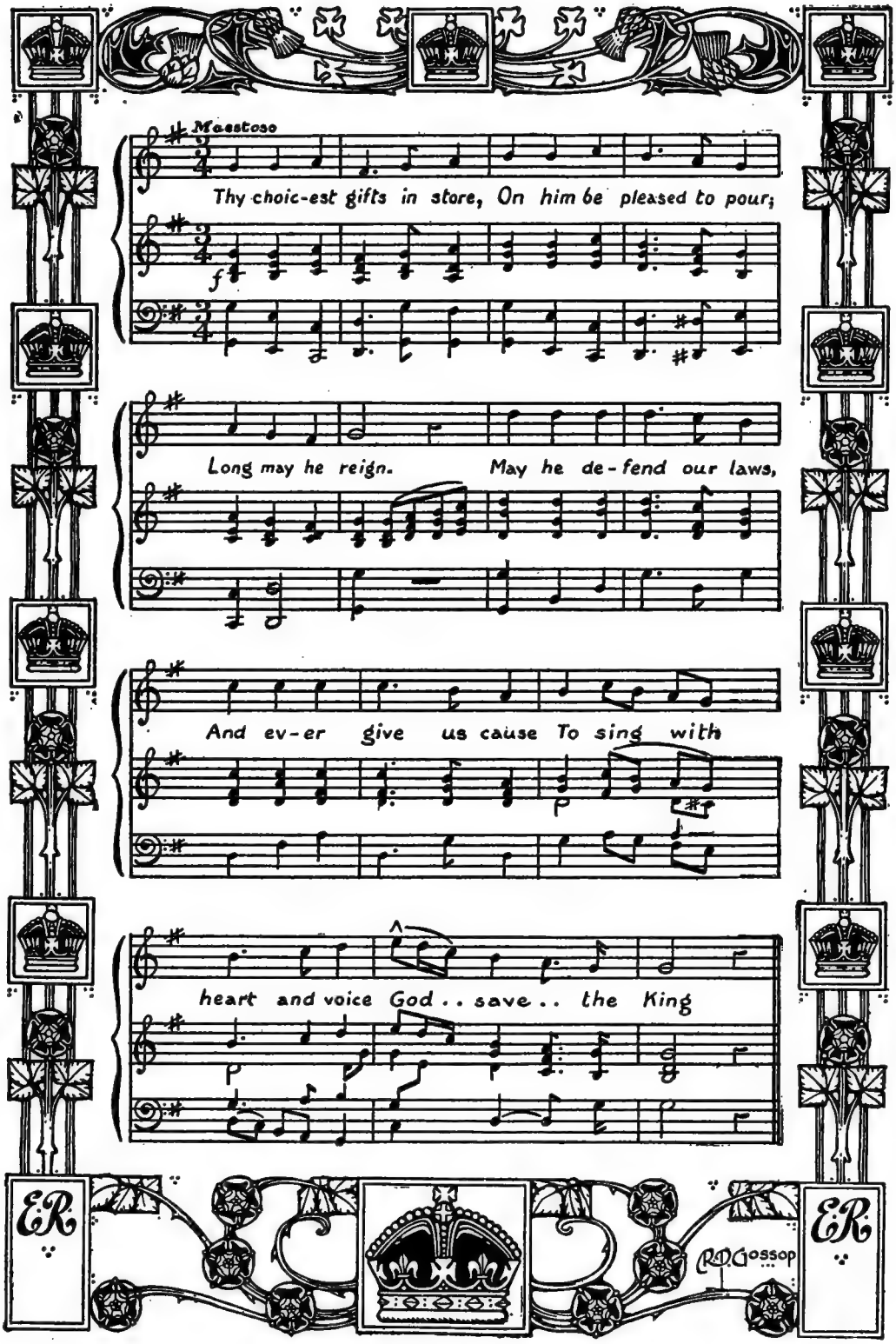
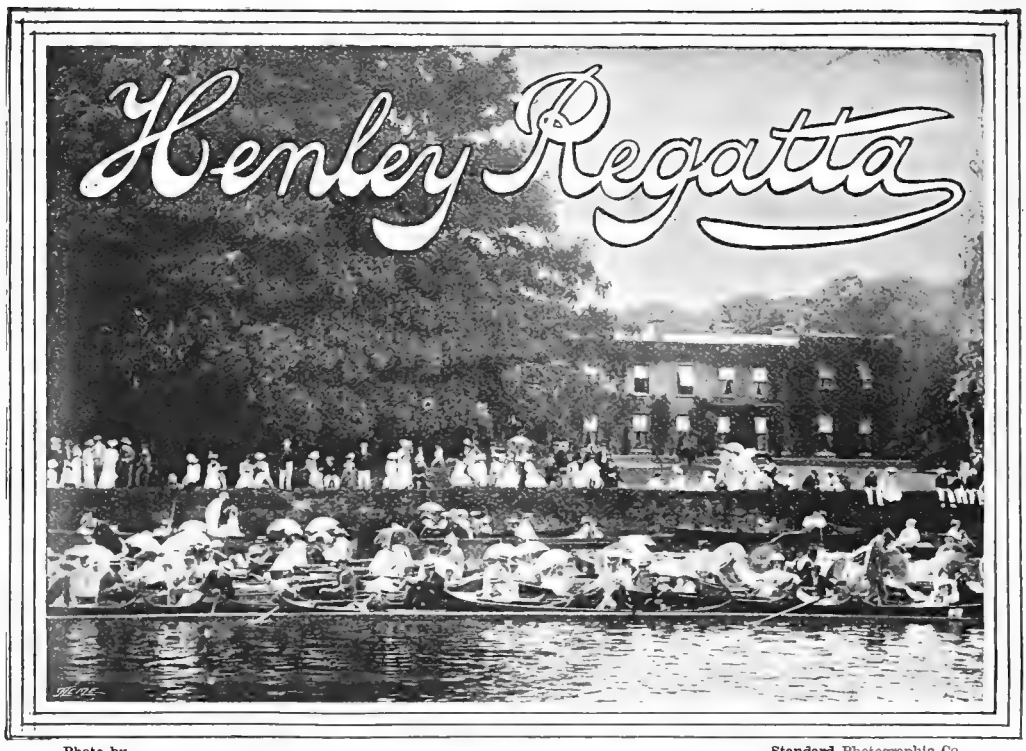

Maestoso
Thy choic-est gifts in store, On him be pleased to pour;
Long may he reign. May he de-fend our laws,
And ev-er give us cause To sing with
heart and voice God . . save . . the King
E R
R.M. Gossop
E R



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The river and the beautiful old Phyllis Court.

THE SPORT, BEAUTY, AND DELIGHTS OF THE GREAT RIVER REGATTA.

By Lieut.-Col. Newnham-Davis.

We are at Paddington Station on a glorious July morning, the Thursday in Henley week, the great day of the most famous regatta in the world. We have come early to the station to avoid the scramble for carriages and rush for places which occur later in the day, and we have reaped our reward in taking our seats comfortably and unhurriedly in a carriage with, as fellow companions, some young gentlemen in flannels, with coloured ribbons round their hats—that pale pink is the Leander colour—and ladies in the freshest of summer frocks and the most delightful of summer head-gear.

The journey down gives us a series of dissolving views. To the tall backs of the houses of the North-west suburbs succeed Wormwood Scrubbs, with the cavalry drilling on the broad stretch of grass; then brickfields and canals, and acres of flower-gardens looking like vast crazy work quilts; a distant view of Windsor Castle; a delightful glimpse of eyots and eel-baskets, a grey bridge, and the silver stream, as we fly over the river at Maidenhead; then more visions of alders and river-side inns, stately houses backed by dark woods, foaming weirs, placid backwaters, the broad Thames with boats of all descriptions moving in one direction, and at last, Henley station.

A crowd is waiting outside the barrier at the end of the platform to welcome friends; men in flannels stand on the wooden buffers and wave hats; sunburnt girls rush at other girls, pink and white from London shade and London hours, and embrace them. Stewards from houseboats seize bags; tall footmen touch their cockaded hats, and outside the station carriage horses stamp and champ; and men vociferously cry the merits of their own vechicles.

It is a straw-hatted crowd, a crowd in which men with tanned faces and ladies with beflowered hats form the majority; a crowd in which boating coats, light and dark blue, crimson, green, and white, are much in evidence, and in which a score of ribbons denote membership of as many different clubs; and there is a large Colonial contingent, and Americans by hundreds, pro-

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claiming their nationality by little brooches and pins of the American flag, and, as often as not, having in their hand a miniature "Old Glory" to wave for the American crew, should one be competing.

We have passed by the entrance to a great red brick hotel, and a twist of the road brings us suddenly to the river and a cluster of boat-houses. To our right is a little colony of tents of all sizes and all shapes pitched on a meadow which edges the water, and all the picturesque accessories of an encampment — bannerets, and flowers in pots, and boating gear, paddles, and the crimson sails of canoes, surround this canvas hamlet, the inhabitants of which seem all to be attired in flannels and boating jerseys.

We have secured long beforehand a punt for the day, so we will escape from the dust and the noise, and drop down stream on to the course.

We are under the cool shadow that the bridge throws, and there to your left, covered from the ground to the roof with ivy, is the old inn, whilst to the right is the house of the Leanders, club above and a vast boat-house below, before which flies the pink flag.

We are well in the midst of the slowly-moving crowd of boats now. There is no room to row in this crush, the punt pole and the paddle alone are used, and a vast amount of good nature and mutual help prevents any untoward collisions.

We drift in the hot sunshine past Elizabethan cottages on one side and great marquees on the other, and now just as we come level with Phillis Court, a fine old house with broad lawns and immemorial elms, a bell rings, a fussy little launch, with an official in blue on her, whistles and goes round and round like a dog after its own tail, and there are cries of "Clear the course."

A gun is fired, and the launches and boats which have been inforcing the clearance of the course move out of sight. There is a pause, and a silence falls on everything. Presently, down stream something glistens—it is the flash of oars, but the best glasses can scarcely yet distinguish the boats—and a very faint sound of cheering comes up on the wind.

The shout grows and grows, you can see hats being waved from the mass of boats on the Oxfordshire side, and the houseboats

Photo by W. A. Rouch.

The *Fair Maid of Perth*, one of the gay-coloured houseboats which line the river bank.

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Photo by Standard Photographic Co.

The lawn of the Isthmian Club, with its big marquee and Japanese umbrellas.

behind them, and up the river come what appear to be streaks of light with rows of bending backs above them, and sparkle of smitten water on either side.

On comes the roar of sound—and you can catch the names of the contesting clubs—on come the boats, the blades tearing up the water in the final spurt, and then a cox cries in shrill treble, "Easy all"; the oars of the first boat lie still above the water, so that you can see the coloured stripes upon them. The other crew cease to row almost at the same moment, and the little grey launch which has followed the boats, nose under

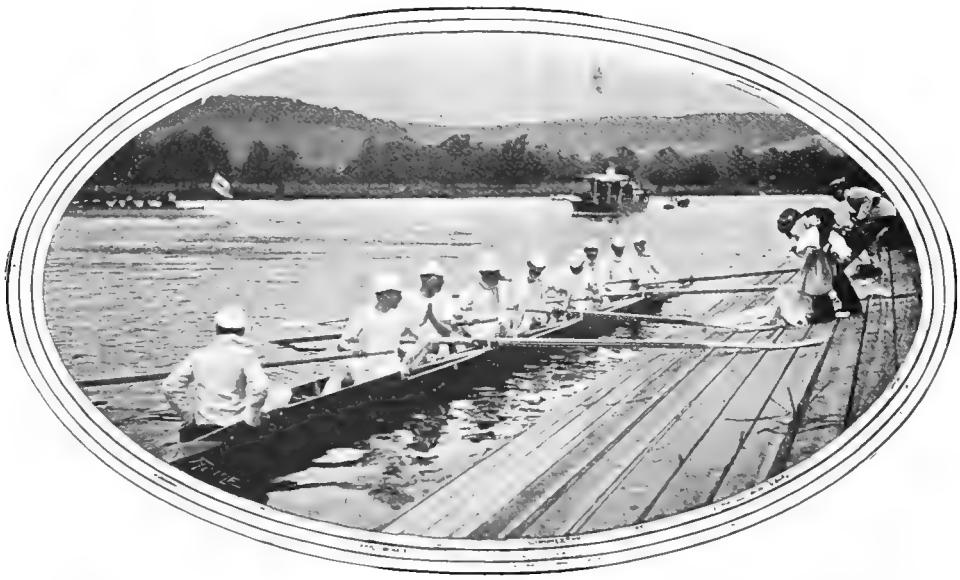

Photo by W. A. Rouch.

The Eton crew, the favourites for the Ladies' Plate.

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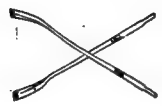
Photo by F. Frith.

The gay scene at Henley regatta, the first and foremost regatta of the year.



water, goes "hard astern"—the first heat of the day is over.

The whole river is in a moment crowded once again with the boats and their gay-coloured passengers. We will keep by the tow-path bank and then drop down as far as the starting-place, and then come up against the stream close to the line of the houseboats. On the path is a crowd three or four deep, in which the browns and greys are lightened by the bright dresses of ladies, by men in white, and by a strong contingent of soldiers who have come over from Reading and other garrison towns, and whose tunics make vivid points of scarlet.

From Poplar Point we have drifted, alongside the long line of nodding trees, to a town of tents and marquees—the home for the week of Clubland, and the Grosvenor Club—and we then move steadily on through the crowd of boats, past cornfields, woods, and farms, and the church of Remenham, to the little leafy island in midstream, and its white temple.

A couple of four-oared racing boats, long delicate shells of wood, so narrow and so close to the water that it seems a wonder that they can support the crews, are by the starting punts near the island, the men, bare-armed and bare-legged, are ready to catch the water with their oars at the word, and the launch with the umpire on board waits behind them.

"Are you ready?"—and there is a pause before the answer is given, for the wind has carried the bow of one boat a little round.

At length "Yes" comes from both strokes, a pistol is fired, both crews catch the water at the same instant, with straining muscles the men seem to lift the frail craft through the water, and, with the launch tearing away behind them, the boats soon dwindle to mere points on the shining water.

We have seen the start for the Stewards' Cup, for which the best of our English fours and possibly a sturdy crew from the Continent are rowing the final heat.

Our waterman has his work cut out for him now that we are working up against the stream; but we are in no hurry, for we are in the midst of the flotilla of boats again, and have come to the commencement of the mile-long line of houseboats and college barges and launches that lie close to the Oxford shore. Take a look to the right, before we get under the lee of the tall craft, at Fawley Court—a fine old house—the warm red of which is seen between the masses of great trees that are grouped round it. Through the park of the Court runs the boundary line between Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

I know of nothing of its kind which can compare with this long line of houseboats which lies before us, each as daintily and as lavishly decorated as any bijou villa, each with its flowers and flags, its lamps and streamers, its

Photo by W. A. Rouch.

Trinity 2nd beating Dublin for the Thames Challenge Cup, 1900.

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Bird's-eye view of the Thames at Henley during the race for the Ladies' Plate.

Photo by W. A. Rouch.

Tea under the trees by the bank at Henley is not the least delightful of entertainments.

gay curtains, and gilding, and clean paint, and shining metal fittings. Observe the crowd of boats that come and go past these miniature floating palaces.

We have not met the musicians and the market men afloat before; but here they are. First the Japs, a party of men and ladies, masked, and in the picturesque Japanese costume. A tiny harmonium, placed amidships in their punt, supplies them with accompaniment, and they sing as their craft is poled slowly from houseboat to houseboat.

There are the fruit sellers also to be seen, the bows of their punts heaped with baskets of strawberries and grapes and other delicacies, and there are boats which show some advertisement on a sail or a placard, and from whence leaflets are distributed, and there is, of course, the myriad coloured crowd of the sightseers, which seems to be packed tighter on the water near the houseboats than anywhere else on the course.

Look at that houseboat we are just passing, the *Golden Grasshopper*, it seems to be all flowers. And here is the *Rouge et Noir*, and here the *Fair Maid of Perth*, one of the largest and most beautiful of the floating dwellings, and here the *Cigarette*, with her gilded cupolas and red, white, and blue rows of flowers. Now we have come to College barges, great sturdy vessels looking like the hulks of old gunboats, bright with white and blue, and decorated with coats of arms.

We have passed a little line of launches, and have come at last to the meadow which is divided into lawns for half-a-dozen clubs, each with its marquee, each with its big Japanese umbrellas, many of them with a band to make music, and we come to the shore at the landing-place of the last of these lawns, and the largest, where the members of the Isthmian Club are "at home."

From inside the marquee comes the clink and clatter of knives and forks and plates; but let us wait for a moment, before we go into lunch, to see the finish of the race for the Ladies' Plate. It would not be a quite perfect Henley if the Eton eight did not win this trophy. Hark how they cheer the boys! "Well rowed Eton! Eton!" It is all right. They are nearly a length ahead, and we may go into lunch knowing that the ladies' favourites have won the ladies' trophy.

We will take to our punt again and cross to the towpath as soon as the race which is now being rowed is over. It is the race for the Diamond Sculls, the greatest prize that any rowing amateur can win, the little jewelled decoration which draws yearly all the oarsmen of uncommon strength and skill from our colonies over seas, from America and from Europe. The loud cheer that comes down the line of packed boats tells that it is

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no ordinary event that is being contested, and as the two men pass, rowing with such force that it seems as though their light skiffs must be torn asunder by their exertions, every man and woman joins in the encouraging shout. Any foreigner who says that we British are unemotional should see us at Henley.

In the score of marquees which have been pitched in the meadow near the Isthmian Club, and which serve as boat-houses, the men of a dozen crews are taking their ease near their craft.

Here are broad-chested, broad-faced Belgians, bearded sturdy young Dutchmen, thin striplings from America—clean shaven, with their hair parted in the middle—an Australian or two, some Germans and Frenchmen. They wear coats, and straw hats and caps, the trimmings and ribbons to which are of combinations of colours strange to our eyes, and the conversation is the talk of the Tower of Babel.

Further down the path in front of their boat-house the Leander crew, pink-capped, bare-legged, are taking their boat down to the water, walking on either side of it, and holding it with the gentleness that its egg-shell construction requires.

Very softly it is put down into the water, very gingerly the men step into it, the long oars with the pink stripes on the blades are smoothly run out, the boat is pushed gently into the stream, the cox. gives some mysterious orders, and when the boat's head has been brought into position, all the oars dip at once and the boat is off to the starting post, ready to do battle for the Stewards' Cup, in the final heat of which the Leanders almost invariably compete. They are all 'Varsity men, these pink-capped young athletes, for the Leander snaps up each year all the best of the oars who row in the contest between Oxford and Cambridge.

From the terrace in front of the tents of the Grosvenor, where we have sipped our tea and eaten our strawberries, we can see the whole course from start to finish, and from here we will watch the race for the Stewards' Cup, see, as the two boats come down the course, the waving hats and handkerchiefs twinkle above the crowd of craft and on the house-boats, as though a breeze came with the contending crews, and hearken to the long roar which comes rolling down the line in ever increasing swell and then dies away again.

The sun is now dropping towards the horizon, the silence of the hot summer afternoon seems to have fallen on all things, the day's racing is over, and on the grass by the crimson stands at the winning post a table has been set, covered with silver cups and great trophies, and ladies sit about it on benches, forming a brilliant hollow square.

Into the cleared space come in eights, and

Photo by Standard Photographic Co.

The grand stand and inclosure at Henley.

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fours, in pairs and singly, the young athletes, still in their flannels, but coated and swathed with mufflers, and advance in turn to the table to take the great vases, the cups, the diamond sculls, and whether they be English, Americans, Colonials, or from the Continent, the same hearty applause greets each crew.

The night has fallen, and we are at dinner now in the saloon of a houseboat. It might be the dining-room of some little villa decorated with Moorish hangings and Eastern arms, were it not that there is the slightest rise and fall, the buoyancy that tells us that we are on board some floating craft, and that outside the little muslin-curtained windows there is constantly the splash of oars mingling with the hum of voices and the sound of music.

It is a dinner party such as only Henley sees; some of the ladies are in evening dress, and some still wear their toilettes of the day, and the men are in dinner jackets or flannels, as best pleases them, while the stewards in their short jackets and brass buttons give a man-of-war touch to the scene.

After dinner we go on the roof of the boat. Above, the sky is violet studded with the glory of the stars, and the far bank, its fields and woods, show purply dim in the mysterious darkness.

All along the line of houseboats the little coloured lamps and Japanese lanterns shine in long rows and squares and curves of jewelled light, and moving slowly and noiselessly on the water are a thousand boats, most of which carry Chinese lanterns swinging from some temporary mast, a forest of brilliancy throwing long rainbow reflections into the indigo depths of the stream.

The voices all seem to be turned down to a lower key, a soft deep murmur as though the world of the river was gently tired; and the distant voices of the musicians floating in their boats add to the soft charm of the closing of the day.

A rocket springs into the air by the bridge, catherine wheels whizz and splutter, and with a loud report myriad coloured balls are scattered in the air. At last a bouquet of high-flung sparks dissolves into a mist of fiery rain, and then the sky grows dark again. It is Henley's farewell to her visitors.

Photo by Standard Photographic Co.

The prize giving at the end of the Henley week.

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How I Married Aunt Anne

MONOLOGUE BY

OWEN OLIVER

Illustrated with photographs of Miss Phyllis Dare by Foulsham and Banfield.

I do not care for boys, of course.

GROWN-UP people pretend that they can do everything; but they can't. I heard mother tell Mrs. Smythe that she could not get Aunt Anne to marry anyone. When I asked her why, she told me to go and do my home-lessons, and not talk of things that I knew nothing about.

I know a great deal more than mother thinks. So I made up my mind that *I* would marry her to somebody; only it puzzled me to find anyone suitable till I went to stay with Auntie in June. Then I decided upon Mr. Arnold who lived next door, and was a widower. I thought his son, Jack Arnold, would make a good cousin-in-law.

I made a face at him.

I do not care for boys, of course; but Jack is quite different from the rest of them. He does not buy sticky sweets and keep them in his pockets, but chocolates in boxes. I like chocolates. He agreed it would be a good thing for me to get Auntie married, because she would not have so much time to look after me then; but he did not want his father to marry anybody to look after *him*.

"Of course," he said, "if he did do it, I'd rather have her than anyone else. She isn't half bad to look at; and she makes ripping cakes!"

She laughed when I told her.

"I am afraid Jack prefers my cakes to my looks," she said; "but you can ask him to tea. Poor motherless boy!"

He certainly did seem to like the cakes. He had nine pieces and was putting another in his

I wore my new hat.

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I screamed.

"He means me!" I whispered.

"You think I am ugly?" I asked.

pocket when I made a face at him. Auntie caught me and looked shocked, and told me to see how nicely Jack behaved.

"You would not think so if you were his mother," I told her.

Auntie said, "Nonsense"; but Jack said he wished she were, because his father was so fond of cakes like hers.

The next day Mr. Arnold took Jack and me for a walk. I wore my new hat. Everyone says it suits me. Mr. Arnold bought us some sweets. I said Auntie was fond of them, so he sent a lot for her. She had two and gave me the rest, and I shared them with Jack.

"If she lived with us," he said, "she would give me things. It wouldn't be so bad, perhaps."

The day after this we climbed up the apple tree; and I fell off into the pond. I *was* a sight! Jack told Auntie it was all his fault; and she said he was a noble boy to take the blame, and only wanted a mother's care. I began to tell her that she had better marry his father, but she put her hand over my mouth. It had the soapy flannel in it, and I screamed; but she said it served me right for being such a tomboy. Tomboy, indeed!

The next Monday we were looking for birds' nests in the hedges, and I got in a prickly bush. Jack tore his jacket getting me out. I told Auntie when she was mending my dress, and she mended his jacket, too. Mr. Arnold came in to thank her in the evening. I think she expected him, because she had her pink silk blouse on.

They talked a long time in the drawing-room, and we heard them through the window. She said that Jack was a fine boy; and Mr. Arnold said that he would be better for refined feminine influence.

"He means me!" I whispered; but Jack gave me such a pinch that I nearly called out. Then Mr. Arnold said that I was a singularly attractive child. Jack pretended that he had to stuff his handkerchief in his mouth to keep from laughing aloud. Wasn't it horrid of him? I boxed his ears when we went down the garden.

"If you think I am ugly," I asked, "why did you punch Willie Thompson for saying nasty things about my hair?"

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I opened my eyes.

I pretended not to see him.

He made out that he only did it because he thought I should feel hurt, and that it *was* true that my hair was like a mop. He said I was not ugly really, ugly, for a girl, that's to say, and I could marry him, if I liked, when he grew up; but I told him I would *not* like.

"Then I shall marry your Aunt," he declared; but I only laughed. You see, I had made up my mind to get her married before he was old enough to marry her.

When he had gone to cricket next evening. I went round to see Mr. Arnold, as Auntie was out. I thought it would be a good thing to give his father a hint to do it. So I told him that Jack meant to marry Auntie.

"Ah!" he said, "I fancied he had an idea of marrying into your family." I opened my eyes.

"If you mean Cousin Florrie, she is not nice at all; and Jack likes me best."

"I should prefer him to marry you, certainly." He seemed quite concerned about it.

"He can't, if he marries Aunt Anne."

"No. We must put a stop to that."

"If we could marry her to some one else?" I suggested.

"What sort of husband would she like, do you think?"

"Tall and dark." Mr. Arnold is. "Someone who bicycles and sings." *He* does. "And who lives near here; and is pretty well off; and is very nice and clever."

"Umph!" he said. "I am afraid it will be hard to find a young man with all these qualifications."

I was just going to ask why he did not marry her himself, if he thought her so nice; but Jack came in. I pretended not to see him; but, as soon as his father had gone, he came and caught hold of me, and swung me round and round. He did not mean to marry Aunt Anne, or anybody but me, he said; and he wished I was a boy, because he could ask me in to tea whenever he liked.

"We're going to have all sorts of pastries to-morrow," he told me. "I tell you what. Jane is going out, and cook is very short-sighted. Suppose you dressed up in some of my things that I've grown out of?"

I did. I made a very good boy, in an Eton suit and silk hat.

After tea we went out in the fields, and had great fun,

I made a very good boy, in an Eton suit and silk hat.

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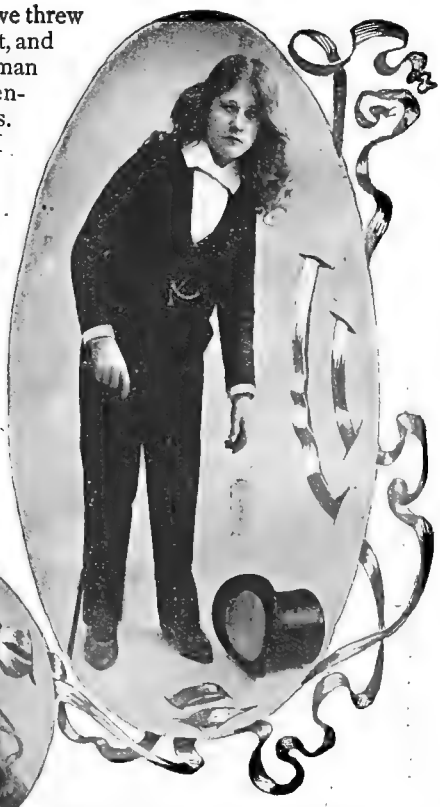
till a cat came along, and we threw stones at it. Jack hit the cat, and I hit a greenhouse. The man it belonged to—the greenhouse, I mean—chased us. He had a whip, and I thought I should not like being a boy, if we were caught. We jumped a ditch for a short cut. At least Jack did. *I* only jumped part of it; but he got me out and pulled me along by the hand, because I was out of breath and could not run very fast.

I came down to be talked to.



My hat fell off, and my hair came all over my face; I *did* feel foolish.

I *do* like Jack!

When we reached the back gate, Mr. Arnold and Auntie were talking over the wall. The man was close behind, so we had to go in.

"Jones Minor has been to tea with me," Jack explained.

"Where's Molly?" Auntie asked.

"I—I can't say."

"Oh!" she cried. "I supposed she was with you. She has been out for hours. What *shall* I do? My *poor* little Molly!"

Then Auntie suddenly recognised me.

"Molly!" she cried. "*Molly!*" Oh! you *naughty* girl."

Just then my hat fell off, and my hair came over my face; and Mr. Arnold simply roared with laughter. I *did* feel foolish.

Auntie did not laugh at all. She said it was improper and wicked and *vulgar*; and I was to go and change into a costume becoming a young lady before she talked to me.

When I came down to be talked to, Mr. Arnold and Jack were there. Mr. Arnold said it was Jack's fault—really; but Auntie would not hear of blaming him.

"Poor boy!" she said, "he has no mother!"

"You could be his mother if you married Mr. Arnold," I told her.

Grown-up people are funny! She caught hold of a chair and turned pink, as if I had said something dreadful! It made her look very pretty, I thought; and Mr. Arnold looked as if he thought so too, and touched her arm.

"Why not?" he asked.

"It would be awfully jolly," Jack told her, and she suddenly turned round and kissed him. He did look surprised.

Mr. Arnold kissed *her* as soon as we were outside the door. We heard it! Jack said as we were going to be cousins-in-law, *he* ought to . . . . but I'm not going to tell you about us.

They can laugh at me as much as they please. I *do* like Jack!

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CELEBRITIES · AT · DINNER

A Unique Article which Describes the Big Dinners Given to and by Big Men; How these Dinners are Prepared, what they Cost, and many Good Stories Concerning Them.

BY WILLIAM G. FITZGERALD.

DINNERS for the great—no subject conveys so vivid an idea of the magnitude of London, or the fact that our city is the centre of the world. Is there a great culinary artist, eagerly courted by Tsars and Kaisers, he is enticed to London sooner or later. And the hotels and public restaurants of our metropolis contain records—both written and personal—which if gathered together would make the biggest and most fascinating book that ever saw the light.

In the old days the *maître chef* was paramount master of his own kitchen. It is different now, for the *maître d hôtel* intervenes between the *chef* and the "Celebrity at Dinner." Sometimes the *maître d'hôtel* has a kitchen experience, and sometimes not. In any case he is a born designer of dishes, and the *chef* will carry out his ideas.

Mr. Albert Young, the photographer of "Celebrities at Dinner," with the steps and camera he uses on all great occasions.

The *maître d'hôtel* at the Carlton is M. Jacques Kraemer, and the *chef* is M. A. Escoffier, beyond all question the greatest culinary artist now living—a marvellous creature, who will make his cunning sauces harmonise with the flowers on the table; fashion an opulent magnolia in full bloom out of scraps of wax; carve blocks of ice with a hot iron, and carry out a hundred different *menus* nightly.

When M. Santos-Dumont was over here the other day a dinner was offered him at the Carlton, and the great Escoffier gave the matter of a new dish much thought. Inspiration came to him in the dead of the night, and he leaped out of bed with a wonderful dish designed. This he called *Sylphides à la Santos-Dumont*—a creation of wondrous lightness, which a breath would blow

King Edward at the Dinner of the Civil Service Rifles, 1898.

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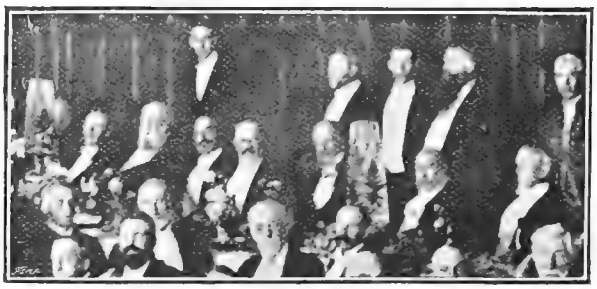
away—an appropriate dish for the "conqueror of the air!"

More than once some unfortunate *contre-temps* has compelled Escoffier to manufacture chicken and every kind of game out of beef, mutton, and veal.

Talking of the resourcefulness of a *chef* reminds me of the following anecdote, related specially for this article by M. Gérard, of the Café Royal. Count Batthyany, the famous



The Centenary Festival of the Royal College of Surgeons. On the right of the King is the Portugese Minister and Lord Salisbury; on the left of the King Sir W. McCormac, the Duke of Cambridge, and Lord Rosebery.

Hungarian noble, ordered a great dinner for ten persons at the Vienna Jockey Club, among the guests being Prince Metternich, and our present King, then the Prince of Wales.

It was a superb dinner, and among the dishes was one of *Ortolans au Nids*. In this case the "nest" of the bird is formed of a huge fresh truffle, scooped out, and filled with *foie gras*. The truffles had to be specially wired for from Périgord, and ten of them duly arrived. At the last moment Count Batthyany came to M. Gérard and said another guest was expected.

What was to be done? There was not a single fresh truffle to be had in the whole of Vienna, but the *maître d'hôtel* came to the rescue and suggested manufacturing at least the semblance of one out of breadcrumbs steeped in ground coffee.

It was arranged that the ortolan perched upon this bogus "nest" should be offered to the host himself, while all the other guests had the real truffles. As is usually the case in these matters, things went wrong, and no less a person than the Prince of Wales himself was served with the bogus truffle. He ate his bird with relish, and then tackled the "truffle." He speedily gave it up, however, and then looked at his fellow guests, who, he saw to his astonishment, were eating their truffles quite contentedly. It was really very puzzling and the *maître d'hôtel*, seeing his ruse had been defeated, was obliged to confess all, much to the amusement of the Prince!

But to return to the Carlton.

M. Escoffier is always thinking of something new. Sometimes a celebrity will ask the master to illustrate a topical event, as for example in 1881, when he produced, "*Les suprêmes de Volailles Jeannette*"—a chicken in aspic being served frozen right in the centre of a block of solid ice, so as to recall the fate of the unfortunate Polar vessel, *Jeannette*, lost in the ice of the North Pole. Then there was the *Soufflé Elizabeth*, a delicious sweet, half hot and half cold, and covered with a veil of sugar and violets, which M. Escoffier designed to commemorate the unhappy fate of the Austrian Empress.

Let us now go and talk to the Carlton *maître d'hôtel*. His *clientèle* are among the most distinguished in the Empire—Mr. Chamberlain and his wife will often drop in to dinner unexpectedly—and M. Kraemer's little army consists of ten head waiters, four wine butlers, and seventy-five waiters, not to mention liqueur men, and

Lord Salisbury as guest of the Conservative Association. Sir Howard Vincent is on the Premier's left, Lord Llangattock on his right.

florists. Many of the waiters are of excellent family, and number an Italian count among them at the present moment.

Asked about interesting episodes, M. Kraemer recalled an amusing episode from his Savoy experience. "I was waiting on the Duke of Fife one night, when his Grace was giving a small private dinner party in the Patience Room. There was hardly room to pass behind each guest. The soup

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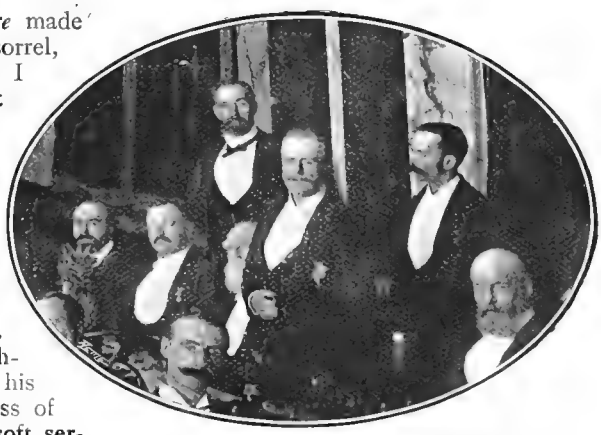
was Bortch—a costly Russian *potage* made from boiled duck, and served with sorrel, vegetables and cream; and just as I was serving it round, an accident happened. In one hand I had a plate of soup, and in the other my cream. The Duke was talking earnestly to me, and so intently did I listen to him that I did not know I was dropping all the cream in a hideous thick stream down his back.

"What did I do?

"I made no fuss, and gave no alarm. The Duke went on talking and laughing with his guests, with the back of his exquisitely-fitting dress coat one mass of thick cream. I got two or three soft serviettes, and as I served his Grace with each course I gave him a rub. By the time we had come to the ice there was nothing left of the cream except certain faint traces, for which I fear his Grace's valet was unjustly blamed."



The Duke of Fife presiding at the dinner of the London Morayshire Society at the Holborn Restaurant.

Let us next turn to the Savoy. Here the art of dining is taken very seriously, too, and on occasion you will see a select committee of connoisseurs tasting and selecting wines with immense gravity. The labels of the bottles are covered up with napkins, and in the case of champagne, each expert takes not more than three glasses. He then records his vote in favour of certain numbers.

This tasting is done in the early morning, after the consumption of raw eggs. The Savoy wine experts include Earl de Grey, the Marquis of Granby, General T. J. Oliphant, Mr. Reuben Sassoon, and Mr. Hwfa Williams.

The records of "celebrities at dinners" at the Savoy would fill a whole library. There was the famous sporting wager which resulted in a dozen friends receiving the "very best dinner in London." It was a marvel, what with ancient and costly wines, exotic flowers, dwarf peach, cherry, orange, and other trees growing on the table out of a veritable picnic *parterre* of real grass. This dinner worked out at £15 a head.

The able and courteous manager of the Savoy, Mr. W. D. Collins, has been kind enough to prepare some notes specially for this article.

"The manager," he remarks, "takes an order for a banquet of celebrities. He has to deal with the kitchen, the plate room, the pantries, the still-room, the coffee kitchen, the bakehouse, the engine room, the works department (for the arrangement of tables), the cloak rooms, the cleaners, extra waiters, and many others." Mr. Collins calculated that one evening there were 600 different dishes served, fifty cooks being engaged to carry out the work.

One night in June, 1894, sixty millionaires met and dined at the Savoy, the "little bill" for that meal coming to £1200. On February 22nd, 1901, the High Commissioner for Canada, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, gave a dinner to Colonel Steele and the officers of Strathcona's Horse in the "White Room" of the Savoy. Among those present were the Marquis of Lansdowne, Mr. Chamberlain, the Lord Mayor, Lord Roberts, Sir Redvers Buller, Mr. Balfour, and many other celebrities.

The dinner to Sir John Tenniel at the Hôtel Metropole, June 12th, 1901. Mr. Balfour, Sir John Tenniel, the Duke of Devonshire, the American Ambassador, and other celebrities were present.

One of the most important functions recorded in the Savoy annals was that known as the Red Dinner, which took place in the

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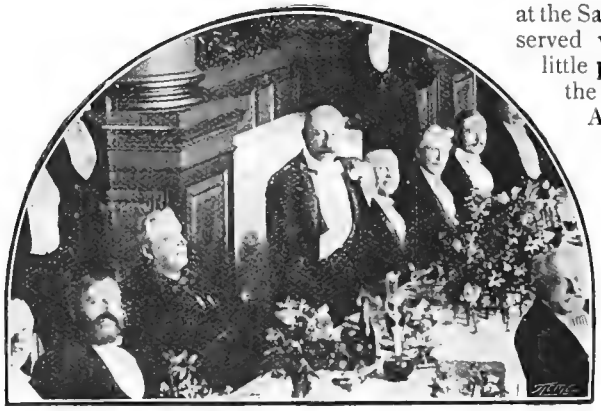

The Dinner of the National Hospital at the Hôtel Metropole. The Duke of Connaught (standing up) was in the chair.

"Pinafore" Room. It was given by two gentlemen of the "Smart Set" who had won something like £15,000 at Monte Carlo. They had kept their winnings and returned to London expressly to give this dinner. The figure "9" printed on the face of the menu, and reproduced again in the menu itself, was the number through which most of the money had been won; and as 9 is "red" in the "little wheel," the *soles au vin rouge* and the *diablotins rouges* explain themselves. The *Pluie d'or* was a species of sauce which fell in a golden shower; and the *Cailles Mascottes* were, of course, for luck.

But the triumph of this menu was a chariot of ice representing Monte Carlo on its rock, with a roulette table on the summit, and lay figures of the croupiers and the players. This "chariot of ice" was wheeled in state through the large restaurant, where all fashionable London was dining, and great was the wonderment at the meaning of this strange procession.

M. Jules Ribstein is the Savoy *maître d'hôtel*. Among the greatest gourmets he has served are Don Carlos, the Spanish Pretender, and the Khedive Ismail—that wildly extravagant creature who spent millions of francs on his kitchen. Ismail would go off into a kind of ecstasy over M. Jules' creations, particularly a dish called *Ecrivisses à la Bordelaise*.

But the greatest feather in M. Jules' cap is his "fillet of sole Alice" (garnished with luscious native oysters), which our King has assured him privately is the finest fish dish he has ever tasted, either in London, Paris, or Vienna.

Jules is a man of marvellous memory, and when one day Sir Richard Bulkeley turned up at the Savoy to dinner he was astounded to be served with sugar candy with his coffee—a little peculiarity of which he had apprised the *maître d'hôtel* ten years previously.

A really great *maître d'hôtel* is on extraordinarily intimate terms with the great ones of the earth. Quite recently the King of Sweden and Norway was seen joking with M. Jules, assuring him that he, too (a Bernadotte!), was a child of Alsace, even as Jules himself was. It must be admitted that the *maître d'hôtel* did not know the exalted rank of his jesting client, nor would he have been aware of it to this day had not General Stanley Clarke and Lady Clarke come over from their table to greet the King.

As well as the committee of wine experts, there is also a "Committee of Taste" for the Savoy and Claridge's, and foremost among the members are the Portuguese Minister—the Marquis Luiz de Soveral; Count Albert Mensdorff, Lord Granby, the Hon. Francis Bertie, and the Earl of Chesterfield.

Claridge's is distinctly a place to find "celebrities at dinner," and particularly the "smart set." Naturally, then, the *maître d'hôtel*, M. August, is something of a personage. So, indeed, is everybody connected with Claridge's, including the pastry *chef*, M. Fontvielle, probably the greatest artist in sugar in the world.

M. August was at Paillard's when that famous restaurant was taking £60,000 a year, and he has served the Imperial Grand Dukes Alexis and Vladimir of Russia. I specially asked M. August

Mr. Chamberlain presiding at the Civil Service Dinner at the Hôtel Cecil on May 18th, 1898.

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about his most wonderful entrée, such as would be served to the most fastidious *gourmet* among his celebrities, and he promptly described for me his *Bécasse à la Riche*. One woodcock, it seems, is wholly roasted, and another only half roasted. This last is then pounded and prepared with champagne and truffles into a thick sauce. This dish alone will cost two guineas a head.

The dinner to Mr. Brodrick at the Hôtel Metropole, July 10th, 1901.

On May 25th, 1901, Mr. Chamberlain gave a luncheon at Claridge's to Lord Milner, or Sir Alfred Milner as he then was. Lord Salisbury was present, of course; so were the Duke of Cambridge, Mr. Arthur Balfour, and his brother Gerald; Lord Selborne, Lord George Hamilton, Sir Henry and Lady Fowler, and practically everybody who is anybody in the political world.

On leaving his old rooms in Duke Street, Lord Milner drove up to the rubber-paved portico of the "House of Call for Emperors," almost unnoticed, and in a shabby cab at that. No representatives of the Press were admitted, the result being that a delightful story told by Lord Milner now sees the light for the first time.

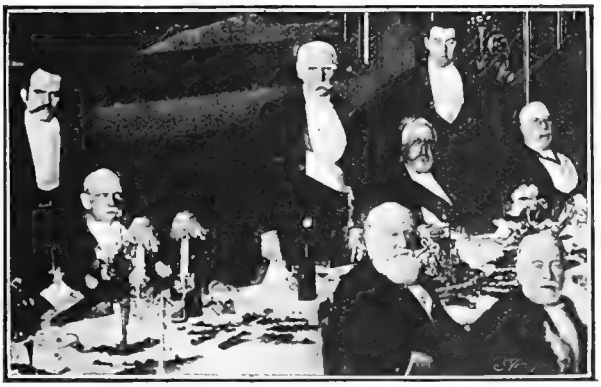
There is, as everybody knows, a great firm of safe and strong-room makers bearing the High Commissioner's name in Finsbury Pavement; and this eminent firm has a very serious grievance against him and the Boers!

Some months ago, it seems, they noticed that their trade in Holland and Belgium was steadily going down, and at length they sent out special agents to see what was the cause of it. These agents came back with the simplest, yet quaintest, of stories. The name of Milner, said they, is loathed, feared, and execrated throughout the Netherlands, and no banker or man of business will buy a safe bearing that name. Milner may be a "safe man" in South Africa, but he won't do in Amsterdam or Brussels!

Let us now visit the smart Berkeley Hotel and Restaurant, and see M. Emile, the *maître d'hôtel*. Here again is a man who has been in constant touch with the great ones of the earth—our own King, the King of Italy, and the Italian Royal Dukes, not to mention ambassadors and statesmen in all the capitals of Europe, from Paris to St. Petersburg.

M. Emile tells of an interesting dinner which he supervised at the Bristol in 1889, when young Lord Cottenham came of age. It was a wonderful dinner, begun with Russian *hors d'œuvres* — Astrachan caviare, rose crevettes, and all kinds of weird things. Among the extraordinary table ornaments was a little sailing boat made by the *chef* entirely out of bread, sculptured with a sharp knife. Among the fish was *truite saumoné à la monseigneur*, a most costly and elaborate dish; while another was a La Presse capon stuffed with the finest fresh Périgord truffles intermixed with rice and rare spices.

The Hock drunk was Rauenthaler "Auslese" ("pick of the grape") a '65 vintage, at 30s. a bottle. The champagne dated from 1874, and was the same price. After dinner came a jeroboam of port of fabulous antiquity; and the bill for that party of nine came to £78.



Earl Roberts and the late Sir Donald Stewart, the white-haired gentleman standing, at the Siege of Delhi Commemoration Dinner, June 8th, 1897, at the Hôtel Cecil.

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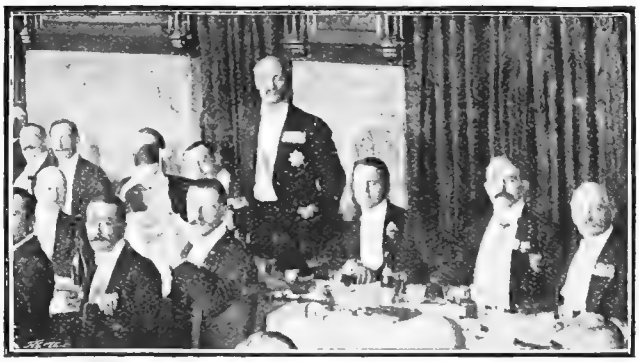


The first Commemoration Dinner of the Defence of Ladysmith, February 28th, 1902. General Sir G. White was in the chair; Commodore Lambton and Sir A. Hunter are on his left.

Lord Cottenham, by the way, is distinctly a *gourmet* of rare taste, who commands the highest admiration of M. Emile. One Thursday the Earl wired from his Bicester seat to his favourite *maître d'hôtel*, saying he wanted some fresh peaches at any cost for a dinner party on the following Monday.

"Figure to yourself how I found myself deranged," remarked the pathetic Emile in voluble French. "Not all the millions of money in London could produce a fresh peach in our metropolis, so I wired to our agent in Paris, and in half-an-hour or so got a reply 'Yes, 19 francs each—only seven in the market.' I replied at once: 'Take them and dispatch immediately.'

"Those seven precious peaches arrived just in time for Lord Cottenham's dinner party, but it was necessary that I should take the train down to Bicester myself with the fruit, about which his lordship could certainly tell an interesting story. What those peaches cost by the time they got on to the dinner table I would be afraid to tell you."

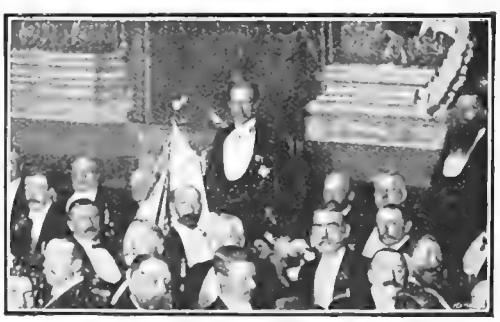
We now arrive at the Hôtel Cecil, at which probably more celebrities have dined than at any other place in the world. Here we have from 110 to 120 persons on the kitchen staff, and an army of 600 waiters. The consumption of comestibles is absolutely appalling, even in the Banqueting Department alone 7000 glasses may be emptied again and again every night.

A banquet is usually ordered by a committee, who inquire about suitable dates, and secure specimen *menus*. When all the banqueting rooms are full—the Grand Hall, Victoria, Medici, Richelieu, Pompadour, and Blenheim *salons*—thousands of more or less distinguished persons may be dining at once.

Maps of the tables are prepared, and dinners with "character" in them naturally call for special attention, as, for example, the big banquet given to Sir Thomas Lipton after his plucky fight for the American Cup. On the table before the guest of the evening was an enormous model of the *Shamrock*, all wrought in sugar under the direction of the *maître chef* of the Cecil, M. Coste, and the genial Sir Thomas had as a background a colossal floral shamrock as big as a couple of doors—one part being of geraniums, another of violets, and a third of chrysanthemums.

As you might suppose, a chat with M. Crippa, the banqueting superintendent of the Hôtel Cecil, yields a vast amount of entertaining matter. While I was talking to him Mr. Judah, the general manager, sent him in a reminder that he was not to forget the episode of a well-known comedian effusively kissing the back of a superintendent's bald head, and afterwards apologising profusely, saying that *he thought it was his face!*

Lord Salisbury used to give a dinner party every year on the Queen's birthday to all the Ambassadors and Representatives of Foreign Powers in England. One year, however, the drains in Arlington Street were being overhauled, and the Premier gave his dinner at the Hôtel Cecil, and so pleased was he that it has been given there ever since. There are usually from fifty to sixty brilliantly dressed Ambassadors, diplomats, and *chefs de mission* present. One feature of this distinguished dinner is the dwarf fruit trees in pots—apricots, cherries, peaches, grapes, etc., all



The dinner to Sir Thomas Lipton at the Hôtel Cecil, November 25th, 1901. A model of the *Shamrock* is on the table in front of Sir Thomas.

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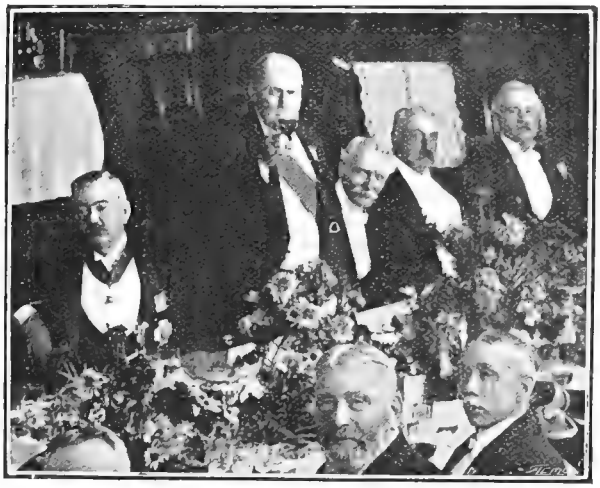
growing on the table, so that the guests may pick them off.

The dinner of American millionaires, given by Mr. Morris K. Jesup, President of the New York Chamber of Commerce, was rather a staggering function, considering that something like two hundred million pounds represented the aggregate worth of the guests. For example, Mr. Andrew Carnegie represented no less than £70,000,000; Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, 60 millions; Mr. W. Bayard Cutting, 10 millions; Mr. J. P. Morgan, jun., 5 millions; Mr. A. Foster Higgins, 4 millions; and so on—right down to the President himself, who was only worth a paltry 1 million.



The late General Sir W. Olpherts proposing "The Queen" at the Annual Dinner of the Survivors of the Relief of Lucknow, September 25th, 1900.

I imagine the fact of the police being called in to eject celebrities at dinner is absolutely unique. Need it be said that it was an Irish dinner, with Mr. John Redmond in the chair?—a St. Patrick's dinner at that. A row had been threatening all through the banquet, and this culminated when the Hon. Edward Blake, M.P., gave the toast of "Ireland and Nation." Immediately there was a free fight, with combatants swaying to and fro, tables collapsing, and glasses smashing.

The Lord Chief Justice presiding at the Annual Dinner of the Actors' Benevolent Fund, Hôtel Metropole, December 18th, 1901.

Distinguished guests naturally keep their best stories for a dinner, and every banquet at the Cecil is well worth reporting. At the British Sea Anglers' dinner Sir Herbert Maxwell told a story illustrating the instinctive propensity of British nature to gamble on something. Three officers in the Transvaal were down with fever, and just before the doctor went his rounds in the morning each patient put half-a-crown in the basin, and the one whose temperature was highest took the pool!

When the Yorkshiremen dine in London—with the Earl of Crewe in the chair—he provides white roses for every guest. These county dinners, by-the-way, are great functions, and, of course, each county has something which no other county can rival.

The Lincolnshire Society's dinner found Sir Richard Webster (just then about to become a Peer) in the chair, and he let the company into his confidence. He said he had received hundreds of suggestions as to the title he ought to assume, many of them the names of various places in Lincolnshire. Some of his correspondents were no doubt actuated by selfish motives, hoping that their land would increase in value. He had thought of "Lord Pump Court" himself, but he decided against a Lincolnshire title, because he was only *half* a Lincolnshire man, having married a Lincolnshire lady!

Once when the Institution of Electric Engineers dined there were 359 men and only one lady member. This was awkward for the speech-makers. Sir John Wolfe Barry got out of it this way: "My lords, madam, and gentlemen," while the Lord

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"Mark Twain" as the guest of the Colquohoun Club at the Monico, June 21st, 1899.

Chief Justice, more personal, chose: "My lords, Mrs. Ayrton, and gentlemen."

At the American Thanksgiving Day Dinner there is "character" even in the dishes, which must include roast turkey and cranberry sauce, with pumpkin pie and clams.

Here is a somewhat awkward remark of a reporter, who, dealing with the Savage Club Dinner, wrote in his paper: "Sir Robert Ball, the eminent astronomer, saw plenty of stars scintillate around him after dinner."

Still more unfortunate was the remark, with enthusiastic intent: "'The Chairman' was drunk again and again."

One learns all kinds of secrets from celebrities at dinner. Once when the Colonial Club was dining at the Cecil, with Sir Robert Herbert, G.C.B., in the chair, he told the tragedy of a former Empire Club which came to grief for lack of support, "one result being that a Secretary of State was sued by the club's butcher for £100."

The Cyclists' Touring Club Dinner is always a success, and good stories are always told. Such cyclists as Lord Alverstone, Sir John Gorst, Lord Onslow, and the Rt. Hon. James Bryce are always present. One celebrity told the following funny story in his after dinner speech. He had seen a lady riding behind a van, when just as she was about to pass, the driver whipped up his team, swinging back his lash several times. The third time it encircled the lady's hat, and tore it off her head, with a great quantity of false hair. The lady screamed; the driver looked back, gave a terrified "Oh! lor!" and then whipped up his team and fled!

The late Lord Chief Justice, Lord Russell of Killowen, was a great diner, and no celebrity was more popular in the chair than he, particularly at the banquets of great charitable institutions. He made very few mistakes in his speeches, the most ludicrous blunder being made at the dinner of some faddist philanthropic society. Next night there was the festival dinner of the Earlswood Asylum for Idiots, and Lord Russell evidently took the wrong speech with him. You can imagine what the effect was when he rose up before the serried masses of philanthropists and commenced:

"The aim of this institution has been to mitigate the sufferings of the afflicted, to train their imperfect faculties, and make them at least relatively of some use to society. It has received and treated 3000 helpless imbecile young people since it was instituted, and returned them to their families—not wholly helpless, not wholly useless." Lord Russell also went on to speak of "the dumb appeal of those who had done nothing to bring on themselves their afflictions."

When celebrities dine, the great thing is to get a tactful chairman. Never will the Cecil people forget the chairman who had the bad taste to make jokes about the guests' names as they were presented to him in the reception room by the toastmaster. When a Captain Pickwick was announced he was

"Lucas Malet" (Mrs. St. Leger Harrison), the famous novelist, presiding at the Women Writers' Dinner at the Criterion, June 17th, 1901.

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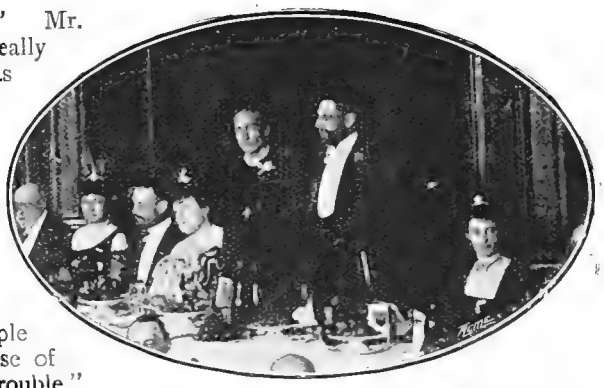
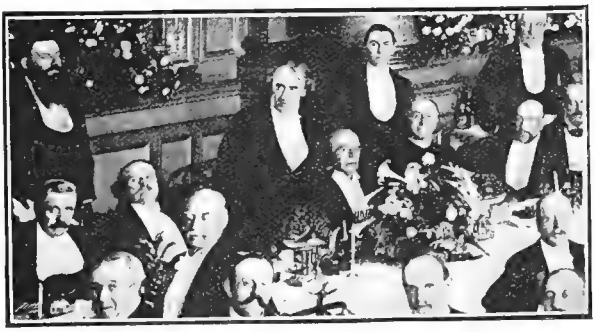
asked "where was the widder?" Mr. Christmas was assured "he had really come too early." Mr. Hornblower was advised "not too loud"; while Mr. Thynne was earnestly assured that that dinner would make a big difference to him!

On the other hand, the chairman often suffers from too little humour, as, for example, the presiding genius at a Licensed Victualler's Dinner, who sternly spoke of "the marauding instincts of those people who get drunk for the sole purpose of involving members of the trade in trouble."



The Bishop of London as the guest of the New Vagabonds, King's Hall, June 12th, 1897. Mr. Rider Haggard, standing on the Bishop's left, was in the chair.

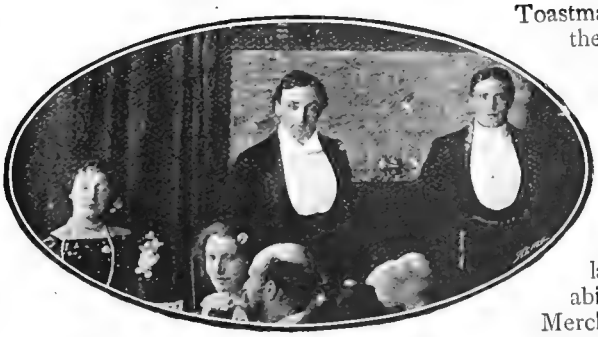
The funniest thing I came across at the Café Monico, where I was greatly helped by Mr. Nobile, the able and courteous manager, was the following episode: On one occasion I served a *Poulet Valencienne*, with white sauce, at a dinner to distinguished Masons, when to my surprise everyone declared they were eating rabbit, if you will believe it! I was obliged to show them the wings of the chicken, and ask them if they had ever seen a rabbit with wings?



Sir Henry Irving presiding at the dinner of the Society of Musicians, Hôtel Metropole, May 27th, 1897.

A very important feature of my unwieldy subject is the procuring of entertainers for the after dinner entertainment. Owing to the vast variety of tastes this is a ticklish matter, and when Somersetshire gives a county dinner it is not easy to find a set of Somerset artistes at an hour's notice, particularly if they are required to prove their origin. Besides the usual vocal and instrumental performers and sleight of hand people, some dinner committees like lightning sketch artists, ventriloquists, or narrators of funny "patter."

On one occasion Messrs. Keith, Prowse, & Co. were asked to supply "living marionettes" for a banquet. It sounded like a cannibal feast, but Mr. De Manche, the firm's able manager in Bond Street, knew that "living marionettes" are contrived by men fixing their heads to a small dummy body, and concealing their own body behind a curtain.



Martin Harvey (in centre of photograph) at the dinner of the Martin Harvey Dramatic Club, Hôtel Cecil, November 10th, 1901.

We now arrive at the reminiscences of Toastmasters. If these gentlemen cared, they might write whole volumes on the subject of Celebrities at Dinner. As a rule they are tactful persons of middle age, imposing presence, and fine sonorous voice. Among the best of them may be mentioned Mr. Farrant, the crier of lost vessels at Lloyd's; Mr. Foreman, of the Bullion Office of the Bank of England, (does it not breathe respectability?), and Mr. Millard, of the Merchant Taylors' Company.

There are toastmasters and toastmasters, and this reminds me of a funny story. Lord

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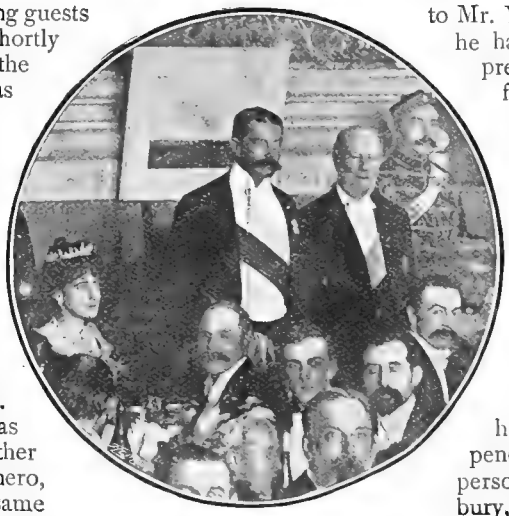
Kitchener was receiving guests at a big banquet, shortly after his return from the Soudan, and there was a small man who, having had one handshake of Lord Kitchener, deliberately went back among the guests who had not yet been presented. Up he came again.

"What name, sir?" said the toastmaster respectfully. Mr. Child, that was his name, enjoyed another handshake of his big hero, and essayed the same game again. This went on four or five times, and at last the toastmaster lost his temper, "What name, sir?" said he, with great irritation. "Mr. Child," he was told, for about the fifth time. "Child, indeed," he snorted, "I should say there was a whole bloomin family of you!"



The East Anglian Dinner to Lord Kitchener on his return from the Soudan, Hôtel Cecil, November 11th, 1898.

Toastmasters are apt to be a little pompous, and on one occasion, when at some big city function, a late Common Serjeant of the City—Sir William Charley—was announced, the toastmaster thought it a little too familiar, so he remarked somewhat wrathfully: "There is no Charleying or Jimmying here," and he promptly announced the name as "Charles," being more dignified.

The business of photographing celebrities at dinner is quite an extensive one, and it is mainly in the hands of Messrs. Fradelle & Young. For years Mr. Albert Young has made this peculiar kind of flashlight photography his own, and every celebrity, from His Majesty downwards, knows this amiable and genial man as a familiar figure at important dinners. I am greatly indebted to Mr. Young for the assistance he has rendered me in the preparation of this article, for he has had, as it were, to print out the central figures in a considerable number of his "Celebrities at Dinner" negatives.

When taking his photographs Mr. Young asks the distinguished chairman to stand up, though it has often happened that an officious waiter has planted himself in front, as happened once with no less a personage than Lord Salisbury, who, obliterated by a stalwart German back, presently sat down in disgust.

Mr. Young notes that eminent soldiers are the least inclined to stand up, particularly Lord Kitchener; and at the big dinner of the East Anglians it required a good deal of persuasion on the part of Sir Frederick Robinson, of the Inland Revenue Department, to induce Lord Kitchener to pose as the central figure in the photograph.

One of the most remarkable dinners Mr. Young has ever attended was that given to General Baden-Powell by his cousins at the Mercers' Hall on September 26th, 1901. There was a good deal of mystery about the affair, and when Mr. Young inquired at the hall for "Mr. Powell," the person he was told to ask for, he was amazed to find there were scores, if not hundreds, of them. Naturally, the news of this "Defence of Mafeking" dinner leaked out, and presently an enormous crowd assembled. Mr. Young stood behind General Baden-Powell, and heard him say to the lady at his side: "Mother, just look at them. I can't face that crowd!"

General Baden-Powell at the luncheon given him by his cousins at the Mercer's Hall, September 26th, 1901.

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THE . . BRIGHTON MYSTERY.

Being the Fourth of a Series of Stories entitled "The Mysteries of Great Cities."

Illustrated by P. B. Hickling.

By Baroness E. Orczy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Man in the Corner *of the A.B.C. shop who tells the story to*
The Lady Journalist.
Mr. Francis Morton (*City man*).
Mrs. Francis Morton.
Mr. Edward Skinner.
Inspector Bückle.
Mrs. Chapman

I.

"Do you care for the seaside?" asked the man in the corner, when he had finished his lunch. "I don't mean the seaside at Ostend or Trouville, but honest English seaside with nigger minstrels, three shilling excursionists, and dirty, expensive, furnished apartments, where they charge you a shilling for lighting the hall gas on Sundays and sixpence on other evenings. Do you care for that?"

"I prefer the country."

"Ah! perhaps it is preferable. Personally I only liked one of our English seaside resorts once, and that was for a week, when Edward Skinner was up before the magistrate, charged with what was known as the 'Brighton Outrage.' I don't know if you remember the memorable day in Brighton, memorable for that elegant town which deals more in amusements than mysteries, when Mr. Francis Morton, one of its most noted residents disappeared. Yes! disappeared as completely as any vanishing lady in a music hall. He was wealthy, had a fine house, servants, a wife and children, and he disappeared. There was no getting away from that.

"Mr. Francis Morton lived with his wife in one of the large houses in Sussex Square at the Kemp Town end of Brighton. Mrs. Morton was well known for her Americanisms, her swagger dinner parties and beautiful Paris gowns. She was the daughter of one of the many American millionaires, (I think her father was a Chicago porkbutcher,) who conveniently provide wealthy wives for English gentlemen; and she had married Mr. Francis Morton a few years ago and brought him her quarter of a million, for no other reason but that she fell in love with him. He was neither good-looking nor distinguished, in fact, he was one of those men who seem to have City stamped all over their person.

"He was a gentleman of very regular habits, going up to London every morning on business and returning every afternoon by the 'husband's train.' So regular was he in these habits that all the servants at the Sussex Square house were betrayed into actual gossip over the fact that on Wednesday, March 17th, the master was not home for dinner. Hales, the butler, remarked that the mistress seemed a bit anxious and didn't eat much food. The evening wore on and Mr. Morton did not appear. At nine o'clock the young footman was dispatched to the station to make inquiries whether his master had been seen there in the afternoon, or whether—which Heaven forbid—there had been an accident on the line. The young man interviewed two or three porters, the bookstall boy and ticket clerk; all were agreed that Mr. Morton did not go up to London during the day; no

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"When discovered he was in the last stage of inanition; he was tied into an armchair with ropes, a thick wool shawl had been wound round his mouth."

one had seen him within the precincts of the station. There certainly had been no accident reported either on the up or down line.

"But the morning of the 18th came, with its usual postman's knock, but neither Mr. Morton nor any sign or news from him. Mrs. Morton, who evidently had spent a sleepless night, for she looked sadly changed and haggard, sent a wire to the hall porter at the large building in Cannon Street, where her husband had his office. An hour later she had the reply: 'Not seen Mr. Morton all day yesterday, not here to-day.' By the afternoon everyone in Brighton knew that a fellow resident had mysteriously disappeared from or in the city.

"A couple of days, then another, elapsed, and still no sign of Mr. Morton. The police were doing their best. The gentleman was so well-known in Brighton—as he had been a resident two years—that it was not difficult to firmly establish the one fact that he had not left the city, since no one saw him in the station on the morning of the 17th, nor at any time since then. Mild excitement prevailed throughout the town. At first the newspapers took the matter somewhat jocosely. 'Where is Mr. Morton?' was the usual placard on the evening's contents bills, but after three days had gone by and the worthy Brighton resident was still missing, while Mrs. Morton was seen to look more haggard and careworn every day, mild excitement gave place to anxiety.

"There were vague hints now as to foul play. The news had leaked out that the missing gentleman was carrying a large sum of money on the day of his disappearance. There were also vague rumours of a scandal not unconnected with Mrs. Morton herself and her own past history, which in her anxiety for her husband she had been forced to reveal to the detective-inspector in charge of the case.

"Then on Saturday the news the late evening papers contained was this:

"'Acting on certain information received, the police to-day forced an entrance into one of the rooms of Russells House, a high class furnished apartment on the King's Parade, and there they discovered our missing distinguished townsman Mr. Francis Morton, who had been robbed and subsequently locked up in that room since Wednesday the 17th. When discovered he was in the last stages of inanition; he was tied into an armchair with ropes, a thick wool shawl had been wound round his mouth, and it is a positive marvel that,

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left thus without food and very little air, the unfortunate gentleman survived the horrors of these four days of incarceration.

"'He has been conveyed to his residence in Sussex Square, and we are pleased to say that Doctor Mellish, who is in attendance, has declared his patient to be out of serious danger, and that with care and rest will be soon quite himself again.

"'At the same time our readers will learn with unmixed satisfaction that the police of our city, with their usual acuteness and activity, have already discovered the identity and whereabouts of the cowardly ruffian who committed this unparalleled outrage.'

II.

"I really don't know," continued the man in the corner blandly, "what it was that interested me in the case from the very first. Certainly it had nothing very out of the way or mysterious about it, but I journeyed down to Brighton nevertheless, as I felt that something deeper and more subtle lay behind that extraordinary assault, following a robbery no doubt.

"I must tell you that the police had allowed it to be freely circulated abroad that they held a clue. It had been easy enough to ascertain who the lodger was who had rented the furnished room in Russells House. His name was supposed to be Edward Skinner, and he had taken the room about a fortnight ago, but had gone away ostensibly for two or three days on the very day of Mr. Morton's mysterious disappearance. It was on the 20th that Mr. Morton was found, and thirty-six hours later the public were gratified to hear that Mr. Edward Skinner had been traced to London and arrested on the charge of assault upon the person of Mr. Francis Morton and of robbing him of the sum of £10,000.

"Then a further sensation was added to the already bewildering case by the startling announcement that Mr. Francis Morton refused to prosecute.

"Of course, the Treasury took up the case and subpœnaed Mr. Morton as a witness, so that gentleman—if he wished to hush the matter up, or had been in any way terrorised into a promise of doing so—gained nothing by his refusal, except an additional amount of curiosity in the public mind and further sensation around the mysterious case.

"It was all this, you see, which had interested me and brought me down to Brighton on March 23rd to see the prisoner Edward Skinner arraigned before the beak. I must say that he was a very ordinary-looking individual. Fair, of ruddy complexion, with snub nose and the beginning of a bald place on the top of his head, he, too, looked the embodiment of a prosperous, stodgy 'city gent.'

"I took a quick survey of the witnesses present, and guessed that the handsome, stylish woman sitting next to Mr. Reginald Pepys, the noted lawyer for the Crown, was Mrs. Morton.

"There was a large crowd in court, and I heard whispered comments among the feminine portion thereof as to the beauty of Mrs. Morton's gown, the value of her large picture hat, and the magnificence of her diamond rings.

"The police gave all the evidence required with regard to the finding of Mr. Morton in the room at Russells House and also to the arrest of Skinner at the Lingham Hotel in London. It appears that the prisoner seemed completely taken aback at the charge preferred against him and declared that though he knew Mr. Francis Morton slightly in business he knew nothing as to his private life.

"'Prisoner stated,' continued Inspector Buckle, 'that he was not even aware Mr. Morton lived in Brighton, but I have evidence here which I will place before your Honour, to prove that the prisoner was seen in the company of Mr. Morton at 9.30 o'clock on the morning of the assault.'

"Cross-examined by Mr. Matthew Quiller, the detective inspector admitted that prisoner merely said that he did not know that Mr. Morton was a *resident* of Brighton, he never denied having met him there.

"The witness or rather witnesses referred to by the police were two Brighton tradesmen who knew Mr. Morton by sight and had seen him on the morning of the 17th walking with the accused.

"In this instance Mr. Quiller had no question to ask of the witnesses and it was generally understood that the prisoner did not wish to contradict their statement.

"Constable Hartrick told the story of the finding of the unfortunate Mr. Morton after his four days' incarceration. The constable had been sent round by the chief inspector after certain information given by Mrs. Chapman, the landlady of Russells House. He had found the door locked and forced it open. Mr. Morton was in an armchair, with several yards of rope wound loosely round him; he was almost unconscious and there was a thick wool shawl tied round his mouth which must have deadened any cry or groan the poor gentleman might have uttered. But, as a matter of fact, the constable was under the impression that Mr. Morton had been either drugged or stunned in some way at

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first, which had left him weak and faint and prevented him from making himself heard, or extricating himself from his bonds, which were very clumsily, evidently very hastily, wound round his body.

"The medical officer who was called in, and also Dr. Mellish who attended Mr. Morton, both said that he seemed dazed by some stupefying drug, and also, of course, terribly weak and faint with the want of food.

"The first witness of real importance was Mrs. Chapman, the proprietress of Russells House, whose original information to the police led to the discovery of Mr. Morton. In answer to Mr. Pepys she said that on March 1 the accused called at her house and gave his name as Mr. Edward Skinner.

"'He required, he said, a furnished room at a moderate rental for a permanency with full attendance when he was in, but he added that he would often be away for two or three days, or even longer, at a time.

"'He told me that he was a traveller for a tea-house,' continued Mrs. Chapman, 'and I showed him the front room on the third floor, as he did not want to pay more than twelve shillings a week. I asked him for a reference, but he put three sovereigns in my hand and said with a laugh that he supposed paying for his room a month in advance was sufficient reference; if I didn't like him after that, I could give him a week's notice to quit.'

"'You did not think of asking him the name of the firm for which he travelled?' asked Mr. Pepys.

"'No, I was quite satisfied as he paid me for the room. The next day he sent in his luggage and took possession of the room. He went out most mornings on business, but was always in Brighton for Saturday and Sunday. On the 16th he told me that he was going to Liverpool for a couple of days; he slept in the house that night, and went off early on the 17th, taking his portmanteau with him.'

"'At what time did he leave?' asked Mr. Pepys.

"'I couldn't say exactly,' replied Mrs. Chapman with some hesitation. 'You see this is the off season here. None of my rooms are let, except the one to Mr. Skinner, and I only have one servant. I keep four during the summer, autumn and winter season,' she added with conscious pride, fearing that her former statement might prejudice the reputation of Russells House. 'I thought I had heard Mr. Skinner go out about nine o'clock, but about an hour later the girl and I were both in the basement, and we heard the front door open and shut with a bang, and then a step in the hall.

"'"That's Mr. Skinner," said Mary. "So it is," I said, "why, I thought he had gone an hour ago." "He did go out then," said Mary, "for he left his bedroom door open and I went in to do his bed and tidy his room." "Just go and see if that's him, Mary," I said, and Mary ran up to the hall, and up the stairs, and came back to tell me that that was Mr. Skinner all right enough, he had gone straight up to his room. Mary didn't see him, but he had another gentleman with him, as she could hear them talking in Mr. Skinner's room.'

"The very embodiment of a prosperous, stodgy 'city gent.'"

"'Then you can't tell us at what time the prisoner left the house finally?'

"'No, that I can't. I went out shopping soon after that. When I came in it was twelve o'clock. I went up to the third floor and found that Mr. Skinner had locked his door and taken the key with him. As I knew Mary had already done the room I did not trouble more about it, though I did think it strange for a gentleman to lock up his room and not leave the key with me.'

"'And, of course, you heard no noise of any kind in the room then?'

"'No. Not that day or the next, but on the third day Mary and I both thought we heard a funny sound. I said that Mr. Skinner had left his window open and it was the blind flapping against the window-pane; but when we heard that funny noise again I put my ear to the keyhole and I thought I could hear a groan.

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I was very frightened and sent Mary for the police.'

"Mrs. Chapman had nothing more of interest to say. The prisoner certainly was her lodger. She had last seen him on the evening of the 16th going up to his room with his candle. Mary the servant had much the same story to relate as her mistress.

"'I think it was 'im, right enough,' said Mary guardedly. 'I didn't see 'im, but I went up to 'is landing and stopped a moment outside 'is door. I could 'ear loud voices in the room—gentlemen talking.'

"'I suppose you would not do such a thing as to listen, Mary?' queried Mr. Pepys with a smile.

"'No, sir,' said Mary with a bland smile, 'I didn't catch what the gentlemen said, but one of them spoke so loud, I thought they must be quarrelling.'

"'Mr. Skinner was the only person in possession of a latch-key I presume. No one else could have come in without ringing at the door?'

"'Oh no, sir.'

"That was all. So far, you see, the case was progressing splendidly for the Crown against the prisoner. The contention of course was that Skinner had met Mr. Morton, brought him home with him, assaulted, drugged, then gagged and bound him and finally robbed him of whatever money he had in his possession, which according to certain affidavits which presently would be placed before the magistrate, amounted to £10,000 in notes.

"But in all this there still remained the great element of mystery for which the public and the magistrate would demand an explanation: namely, what were the relationships between Mr. Morton and Skinner, which had induced the former to refuse the prosecution of the man who had not only robbed him, but had so nearly succeeded in leaving him to die a terrible and lingering death. Mr. Morton was too ill as yet to appear in person. Dr. Mellish had absolutely forbidden his patient to undergo the fatigue and excitement of giving evidence himself in court that day. But his depositions had been taken at his bedside, were sworn to by him, and were now placed before the magistrate by the prosecuting counsel, and the facts they revealed were certainly as remarkable as they were brief and enigmatical.

"As they were read by Mr. Pepys, an awed and expectant hush seemed to descend over the large crowd gathered there, and all necks were strained eagerly forward to catch a glimpse of a tall, elegant woman, faultlessly dressed and wearing exquisite jewellery, but whose handsome face wore, as the prosecuting counsel read her husband's deposition, a more and more ashen hue.

"'This, your Honour, is the statement made upon oath by Mr. Francis Morton,' commenced Mr. Pepys in that loud, sonorous voice of his which sounds so impressive in a crowded and hushed court. '"I was obliged for certain reasons which I refuse to disclose to make a payment of a large sum of money to a man whom I did not know and have never seen. It was in a matter of which my wife was cognisant and which had entirely to do with her own affairs. I was merely the go-between, as I thought it was not fit that she should see to this matter herself. The individual in question had made certain demands, of which she kept me in ignorance as long as she could, not wishing to unnecessarily worry me. At last she decided to place the whole matter before me, and I agreed with her that it would be best to satisfy the man's demands.

"'"I then wrote to that individual whose name I do not wish to disclose, addressing the letter, as my wife directed me to do, to the Brighton post office, saying that I was ready to pay the £10,000 to him, at any place or time and in what manner he might appoint. I received a reply which bore the Brighton postmark, and which desired me to be outside Furnival's, the drapers in West Street, at 9.30 on the morning of March 17th, and to bring the money (£10,000) in Bank of England notes.

"'"On the 16th, my wife gave me a cheque for the amount and I cashed it at her bank—Bird's in Fleet Street. At half past nine the following morning I was at the appointed place. An individual wearing a grey overcoat, bowler hat, and red tie accosted me by name and requested me to walk as far as his lodgings in the King's Parade. I followed him. Neither of us spoke. He stopped at a house which bore the name 'Russells House,' and which I shall be able to swear to as soon as I am able to go out. He let himself in with a latch-key and asked me to follow him up to his room on the third floor. I thought I noticed when we were in the room that he locked the door; however I had nothing of any value about me except the £10,000, which I was ready to give him. We had not exchanged the slightest word.

"'"I gave him the notes and he folded them and put them in his pocket-book. Then I turned towards the door, and without the

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slightest warning I felt myself suddenly gripped by the shoulder while a handkerchief was pressed to my nose and mouth. I struggled as best I could, but the handkerchief was saturated with chloroform, and I soon lost consciousness. I hazily remember the man saying to me in short, jerky sentences spoken at intervals while I was still weakly struggling:

"'"'What a fool you must think me, my dear sir! did you really think that I was going to let you quietly walk out of here, straight to the police-station, eh? Such dodges have been done before, I know, when a man's silence has to be bought for money. Find out who he is, see where he lives, give him the money, then inform against him. No you don't! not this time. I am off to the Continong with this £10,000 and I can get to Newhaven in time for the mid-day boat, so you'll have to keep quiet until I am the other side of the Channel, my friend. You won't be much inconvenienced, my landlady will hear your groans presently and release you, so you'll be all right. There, now, drink this—that's better.' He forced something bitter down my throat then I remember nothing more.

"'"When I regained consciousness I was sitting in an armchair with some rope tied round me and a wool shawl round my mouth. I hadn't the strength to make the slightest effort to disentangle myself or to utter a scream. I felt terribly sick and faint."'

"Mr. Reginald Pepys had finished reading and no one in that crowded court had thought of uttering a sound, the magistrate's eyes were fixed upon the handsome lady in the magnificent gown, who was mopping her eyes with a dainty lace handkerchief.

"The extraordinary narrative of the victim of so daring an outrage, had kept everyone in suspense; one thing was still expected to make the measure of sensation as full as it had ever been over any criminal case, and that was Mrs. Morton's evidence. She was called by the prosecuting counsel, and slowly, gracefully, she entered the witness-box. There was no doubt that she had felt keenly the tortures which her husband had undergone, and also the humiliation of seeing her name dragged forcibly into this ugly, blackmailing scandal.

"Closely questioned by Mr. Reginald Pepys, she was forced to admit that the man who blackmailed her was connected with her early life in a way which would have brought terrible disgrace upon her and upon her children. The story she told, amidst many tears and sobs, and much use of her beautiful lace handkerchief and beringed hands, was exceedingly pathetic.

"It appears that when she was barely seventeen she was inveigled into a secret marriage with one of those foreign adventurers who swarm in every country, and who styled himself Comte Armand de la Tremouille. He seems to have been a blackguard of unusually low pattern, for, after he had extracted from her some £200 of her pin money and a few diamond brooches, he left her one fine day with a laconic word to say that he was sailing for Europe by the *Argentina*, and would not be back for some time. She was in love with the brute, poor young soul, for when, a week later, she read that the *Argentina* was wrecked, and presumably every soul on board had perished, she wept very many bitter tears over her early widowhood.

"Fortunately her father, a very wealthy pork butcher of Chicago, had known nothing of his daughter's culpable foolishness. Four years later he took her to London, where she met Mr. Francis Morton and married him. She led six or seven years of very happy married life when one day, like a thunderbolt from a clear, blue sky, she received a typewritten letter, signed 'Armand de la Tremouille,' full of protestations of undying love, telling a long and pathetic tale of years of suffering in a foreign land, whither he had drifted after having been rescued almost miraculously from the wreck of the *Argentina*, and where he never had been able to scrape a sufficient amount of money to pay for his passage home. At last fate had favoured him. He had after many vicissitudes found the whereabouts of his dear wife, and was now ready to forgive all that was past and take her to his loving arms once again.

"What followed was the usual course of events when there is a blackguard and a fool of a woman. She was terrorised and did not dare to tell her husband for some time; she corresponded with the Comte de la Tremouille, begging him for her sake and in memory of the past not to attempt to see her. She found him amenable to reason in the shape of several hundred pounds which passed through the Brighton post office into his hands. At last one day, by accident, Mr. Morton came across one of the Comte de la Tremouille's interesting letters. She confessed everything, throwing herself upon her husband's mercy.

"Now Mr. Francis Morton was a business

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man who viewed life practically and soberly. He liked his wife who kept him in luxury, and wished to keep her, whereas the Comte de la Tremouille seemed willing enough to give her up for a consideration. Mrs. Morton, who had the sole and absolute control of her fortune on the other hand, was willing enough to pay the price and hush up the scandal, which she believed—since she was a bit of a fool—would land her in prison for bigamy. Mr. Francis Morton wrote to the Comte de la Tremouille that his wife was ready to pay him the sum of £10,000 which he demanded in payment for her absolute liberty and his own complete disappearance out of her life now and for ever. The appointment was made and Mr. Morton left his house at 9 a.m. on March 17th, with the £10,000 in his pocket.

"The public and the magistrate had hung breathless upon her words. There was nothing but sympathy felt for this handsome woman, who throughout had been more sinned against than sinning, and whose gravest fault seems to have been a total lack of intelligence in dealing with her own life. But I can assure you of one thing, that in no case within my recollection was there ever such a sensation in a court, as when the magistrate, after a few minutes' silence, said gently to Mrs. Morton:

"'And now, Mrs. Morton, will you kindly look at the prisoner, and tell me if in him you recognise your former husband?'

"And she, without even turning to look at the accused, said quietly:

"'Oh no! your honour! of course that man is *not* the Comte de la Tremouille.'

'She confessed everything, throwing herself upon her husband's **mercy."**

III.

"I can assure you that the situation was quite dramatic," continued the man in the corner, whilst his funny, claw-like hands took up a bit of string with renewed feverishness.

"In answer to further questions from the magistrate, she declared that she had never seen the accused; he might have been the go-between, however, that she could not say. The letters she received were all typewritten, but signed 'Armand de la Tremouille,' and certainly the signature was identical with that on the letters she used to receive from him years ago, all of which she had kept.

"'And did it *never* strike you,' asked the magistrate with a smile, 'that the letters you received might be forgeries?'

"'How could they be?' she replied decisively; 'no one knew of my marriage to the Comte de la Tremouille, no one in England certainly. And besides, if some one

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did know the Comte intimately enough to forge his handwriting and to blackmail me, why should that some one have waited all these years? I have been married seven years, your honour.'

"That was true enough, and there the matter rested as far as she was concerned. But the identity of Mr. Francis Morton's assailant had to be finally established, of course, before the prisoner was committed for trial. Dr. Mellish promised that Mr. Morton would be allowed to come to court for half-an-hour and identify the accused on the following day, and the case was adjourned until then. The accused was led away between two constables, bail being refused, and Brighton had perforce to moderate its impatience until the Wednesday.

"The court was crowded to overflowing; actors, playwrights, literary men of all sorts had fought for admission to study for themselves the various phases and faces in connection with the case. Mrs. Morton was not present when the prisoner, quiet and self-possessed, was brought in and placed in the dock. His solicitor was with him and a sensational defence was expected.

"Presently there was a stir in the court, and that certain sound, half rustle, half sigh, which preludes an expected palpitating event. Mr. Morton, pale, thin, wearing yet in his hollow eyes the stamp of those five days of suffering, walked into court leaning on the arm of his doctor—Mrs. Morton was not with him.

"He was at once accommodated with a chair in the witness-box, and the magistrate, after a few words of kindly sympathy, asked him if he had anything to add to his written statement. On Mr. Morton replying in the negative, the magistrate added—

"'And now, Mr. Morton, will you kindly look at the accused in the dock and tell me whether you recognise the person who took you to the room in Russells House and then assaulted you?'

"Slowly the sick man turned towards the prisoner and looked at him; then he shook his head and replied quietly:

"'No, sir, that certainly was not the man.'

"'You are quite sure?' asked the magistrate in amazement, while the crowd literally gasped with wonder.

"'I swear it,' asserted Mr. Morton.

"'Can you describe the man who assaulted you?'

"'Certainly. He was dark, of swarthy complexion, tall, thin, with bushy eyebrows and thick black hair and short beard. He spoke English with just the faintest suspicion of a foreign accent.'

"The prisoner, as I told you before, was English in every feature. English in his ruddy complexion, and absolutely English in his speech.

"After that the case for the prosecution began to collapse. Everyone had expected a sensational defence, and Mr. Matthew Quiller, counsel for Skinner, fully justified all these expectations. He had no fewer than four witnesses present who swore positively that at 9.45 a.m. on the morning of Wednesday, March 17, the prisoner was in the express train leaving Brighton for Victoria.

"Not being endowed with the gift of being in two places at once, and Mr. Morton having added the whole weight of his own evidence in Mr. Edward Skinner's favour, that gentleman was once more remanded by the magistrate, pending further investigation by the police, bail being allowed this time in two sureties of £50 each.

IV.

"Tell me what you think of it," said the man in the corner, seeing that I remained silent and puzzled.

"Well," I said dubiously, "I suppose that the so-called Armand de la Tremouille's story was true in substance. That he did not perish on the *Argentina*, but drifted home, and blackmailed his former wife."

"Doesn't it strike you that there are at least two very strong points against that theory?" he asked, making two gigantic knots in his piece of string.

"Two?"

"Yes. In the first place, if the blackmailer was the 'Comte de la Tremouille' returned to life, why should he have been content to take £10,000 from a lady who was his lawful wife, and who could keep him in luxury for the rest of his natural life upon her large fortune, which was close upon a quarter of a million. The real Comte de la Tremouille, remember, had never found it difficult to get money out of his wife during their brief married life, whatever Mr. Morton's subsequent experience in the same direction might have been. And, secondly, why should he have type-written his letters to his wife?"

"Because——"

"That was a point which, to my mind, the police never made the most of. Now, my experience in criminal cases has invariably been that when a typewritten letter figures in

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one, that letter is a forgery. It is not very difficult to imitate a signature, but it is a jolly sight more difficult to imitate a handwriting throughout an entire letter."

"Then, do you think——"

"I think, if you will allow me," he interrupted excitedly, "that we will go through the points—the sensible, tangible points of the case. Firstly: Mr. Morton disappears with £10,000 in his pocket, for four entire days; at the end of that time he is discovered loosely tied to an arm-chair, and a wool shawl round his mouth. Secondly: A man named Skinner is accused of the outrage. Mr. Morton, although he himself is able—mind you—to furnish the best defence possible for Skinner, by denying his identity with the man who assaulted him, refuses to prosecute. Why?"

"He did not wish to drag his wife's name into the case."

"He must have known that the Crown would take up the case. Then again, how is it no one saw him in the company of the swarthy foreigner he described?"

"Two witnesses did see Mr. Morton in company with Skinner," I argued.

"Yes, at 9.20 in West Street; that would give Edward Skinner time to catch the 9.45 at the station, and to intrust Mr. Morton with the latchkey of Russells House," remarked my companion dryly.

"What nonsense!" I ejaculated.

"Nonsense, is it?" he said, tugging wildly at his bit of string; "is it nonsense to affirm that if a man wants to make sure that his victim shall not escape, he does not usually wind rope 'loosely' round his figure, nor does he throw a wool shawl lightly round his mouth. The police were idiotic beyond words; they themselves discovered that Morton was so 'loosely' fastened to his chair that very little movement would have disentangled him, and yet it never struck them that nothing was easier for that particular type of scoundrel to sit down in an armchair and wind a few yards of rope round himself, then, having wrapped a wool shawl round his throat, to slip his two arms inside the ropes."

"But what object would a man in Mr. Morton's position have for playing such extraordinary pranks?"

"Ah, the motive! There you are! What do I always tell you? Seek the motive! Now what was Mr. Morton's position? He was the husband of a lady who owned a quarter of a million of money, not one penny of which he could touch without her consent, as it was settled on herself, and who, after the terrible way in which she had been plundered and then abandoned in her early youth, no doubt kept a very tight hold upon the purse-strings. Mr. Morton's subsequent life has proved that he had certain expensive, not altogether avowable, tastes. One day he discovers the old love letters of the 'Comte Armand de la Tremouille.'

"Then he lays his plans: He typewrites a letter, forges the signature of the erstwhile Count, and awaits events. The fish does rise to the bait. He gets sundry bits of money, and his success makes him daring. He looks round him for an accomplice—clever, unscrupulous, greedy—and selects Mr. Edward Skinner, probably some former pal of his wild oats days.

"The plan was very neat you must confess. Mr. Skinner takes the room in Russells House, and studies all the manners and customs of his landlady and her servant. He then draws the full attention of the police upon himself. He meets Morton in West Street, then disappears ostensibly after the 'assault.' In the meanwhile, Morton goes to Russells House. He goes upstairs, talks loudly in the room, then makes elaborate preparations for his comedy."

"Why! he nearly died of starvation!"

"That, I daresay, was not a part of his reckoning. He thought, no doubt, that Mrs. Chapman or the servant would discover and rescue him pretty soon. He meant to appear just a little faint, and endured quietly the first twenty-four hours of inanition. But the excitement and want of food told on him more than he expected. After twenty-four hours he turned very giddy and sick, and, falling from one fainting fit into another, was unable to give the alarm.

"However, he is all right again now, and concludes his part of a downright blackguard to perfection. Under the plea that his conscience does not allow him to live with a lady whose first husband is still alive, he has taken a bachelor flat in London, and only pays afternoon calls on his wife in Brighton. But presently he will tire of his bachelor life, and will return to his wife. And I'll guarantee that the Comte de la Tremouille will never be heard of again."

And he left me alone with a couple of photos of two uninteresting, stodgy, quiet-looking men—Morton and Skinner—who, if the man in the corner was right in his theories, were a pair of the finest blackguards unhung.

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"UNEASY LIES THE HEAD THAT WEARS A CROWN"

By
George Western.

Illustrated with Photographs.

Photo by Flornan.

King Oscar of Sweden, whose great tact alone holds Scandinavia together.

The dangers and troubles which beset the thrones of various monarchs of Europe.

In a year when the pomp and splendour of royalty and all its attributes is so forcibly brought home to us, at a time when loyalty and enthusiasm for one's country and one's country's sovereign holds the hearts of all, little is thought of the likelihood of a sudden upheaval of this splendour of the throne, of a revolution or attack against the person of the sovereign.

We do not think of that. Our throne is safe enough; our sovereign may sleep secure. Against his person are no plots, no pretenders raise rebel forces to overthrow his power, no secret societies hold meetings in dark cellars to scheme darker deeds against their king.

But is this the case in all countries? Let us consider a moment. On the continent—in Europe—how do things lie? Norway, Austria, Spain, Portugal—all the powers—how safe are their rulers? There are in nearly all countries many disaffected people who would at the least encouragement rise against their sovereigns or governments.

No more difficult task could have been allotted to any monarch than that of preserving peace and unity between the countries of Norway and Sweden. King Oscar is, however, a king amongst tacticians, and by his careful judgment and moderation has kept his fractious people from openly quarrelling.

For the welfare of these two countries it is of the greatest importance that they should join together, remembering the motto that "Unity is Strength," and, indeed, much strength is needed, and much unity, to thwart the evil plans of Russia, ever encroaching, or seeming to encroach on their already narrowed territories.

However, so far, under King Oscar, peace and quiet have been maintained, but the day will come when the veteran monarch must join his fathers, and his son Gustav Adolph will reign in his stead. And herein will lie the difficulty. Prince Gustav Adolph has none of the tact of his father, none of the foresight and moderation. He is young, fiery, and, possibly, reckless. So much so, that, when he comes to reign, a rapid disintegration of the two countries will inevitably follow, and perhaps an international war.

Religious strife will be one of the principal means of upsetting the Italian sovereignty. Before his assassination, King Umberto discovered that a juncture was imminent between the Vatican and the Republican party. Such a union would be most disastrous as far as the monarchy is concerned, and

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could, if carried out, ultimately bring about the fall of the House of Savoy.

For here is added to the hopelessly dilapidated state of financial affairs, over taxation and oppression, religious disunion. Indeed, to secure his position King Victor Emmanuel must keep on the best possible terms with the Pope and the Vatican generally.

Spain, like Italy, is threatened on religious grounds. Here, also, there is a legitimate claimant to the throne, Don Carlos, who has the support of the clergy. The country is, indeed, in a direful state. Financially, Spain has been broken by the Hispano-American war, and the most moderate and liberal policy is necessary, not only to make both ends meet, but also to keep the country free from rebellion.

The queen-mother, Doña Christina, during her regency, always upheld the clergy, whose power has, in consequence, been steadily rising. This goes against the grain of the country, and hence the great dislike for the reigning house.

Photo by Brogi.

King Victor Emmanuel of Italy, at enmity with the Vatican party, who are strengthening their position yearly.

Photo by Brogi.

The Queen of Italy.

Again, for many years the young king was failing in health. In the event of his death the throne would go to his sister, the Princess of the Asturias, whose marriage to the Count of Caserta has bound her, hand and foot, to the Vatican. Thus the death of King Alphonso and the accession of his sister would be of the greatest harm to Spain.

The safety of the throne depends on the young king entirely, whether he follow his mother, Doña Christina, and the clerical party, or, wisely, attach himself to the liberal and tactful counsels of the great statesman, Señor Sagasta, whereby he will save his skin and crown.

Meanwhile his rival, Don Carlos, is the hope of the clergy, who are only prevented from openly supporting the Carlist cause by the mandate of Pope Leo XIII.

More insecure than Spain is the throne of Servia. Here are no political or financial difficulties, nor are there any troubles of the church to deal with. The difficulty was caused in the first place by a little lad with

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"a golden bow and a wing on either shoulder," answering to the name of Cupid.

Mme. Draga Maschin was the daughter of a policeman, and the widow of an engineer, who committed suicide. Having been taken up by the court, this handsome adventuress wormed her way into the heart of the young King Alexander, and, although full sixteen years his senior, led him triumphantly to the altar.

The ministry at once resigned, and the country was horrified to find that their king had married one of his mother's maids. But the king will not give up his wife, and the nation will not give in to her. She is now boycotted by the whole of the country, and treated with little or no respect by the people when she takes her walks abroad, while the ladies of the foreign *corps diplomatique* absolutely ignore her.

Indeed, before long, the hardly suppressed hissings and other most forcible expressions of disgust which greet the monarch now, will take a decidedly tangible form, and a big insurrection will ease the reigning family of its responsibilities of kingship, and raise in its stead the opposition family, the Karageorgevitchs.

Clerical strife is evident again in Portugal. Here King Charles, opposing the clergy so strongly, has lost the affection of his wife, Queen Amelia, who is a strong advocate of the cloth. Thus the nation, following their sovereigns, is naturally divided. This breach in itself would have been of comparatively little importance had not the opposition party given rise to the hopes of the legitimists, including the entire country aristocracy, strengthening the claims of the pretender, Don Miguel of Braganza. However, King Charles is still powerful, and the hopes of Don Miguel are in no way likely to be fulfilled in the immediate future.

Photo by Dittrich.

Don Carlos and his wife. The champion of the Legitimist party, who claimed the throne of Spain.

In Russia, where the country is ground down and oppressed more than any other, where Nihilists and rebels abound, any attempt on the part of a private individual to help the people is regarded as an application for free board and lodging in Siberia. The Tsar Nicholas II. has great ideas of a liberal rule, but unfortunately is unable to carry them out.

His *rôle* of the Prince of Peace and his opposition to the Slavists made a good impression on the people; but this was soon taken away, and things became worse than ever; all the earnestly promised reforms and hoped-for Utopia vanished before the eyes of the wretched natives.

There are two claimants to the throne, Grand Duke Michael and Grand Duke Vladimir. But it is not likely that either of these two

Photo by Franzen.

King Alphonso of Spain, whose throne is threatened by the Carlists.

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King Alexander of Servia, whose marriage with Draga Maschin, the daughter of a policeman, so shocked the whole country that the throne is in imminent danger.

Photo by Adèle.

Photo by Guesquin.

aspirants will enjoy the regal sway for many years, as each holds strong reactionary views. So it would seem that the dethronement of the Tsar would mean not only that of the House of Romanoff, but do away with the very throne of Russia itself.

It is extremely unfortunate for the throne of Russia that the Tsarina has no sons, all her children being daughters. This, and the fact that Her Imperial Majesty is so very foreign — foreign from the Russian point of view, that is to say, in her manner of life and ways —causes much annoyance to the highly nervous and excitable Slavonic race.

King Charles of Roumania has had to deal with the same foe as have the ministers of his neighbour, Servia. Certainly Cupid made the most of his time during his sojourn in the land of the blue Danube.

Prince Ferdinand was a young and possibly a susceptible man, and was quite carried away by the flashing eyes of a lady well known in English society, the favourite maid of honour of "Carmen Sylva," the Queen of Roumania. Whether the prince's mother encouraged this most romantic little affair or not is not known, but at any rate the two became engaged and might have married had not the King and the ministry stepped in and banished the beautiful girl. The

Photo by Camacho.

King Charles of Portugal, whose quarrel with Queen Amelia has severed him from the clerical party.

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Photo by Levitsky.

Tsar Nicholas II. and the Tsarina. The whole of Russia is on the verge of rebellion against the Czar, who is unable to carry out his liberal reforms.

prince they threatened to deprive of his right of succession to the Roumanian throne if he did not give her up and marry Princess Marie of Coburg.

But not even now were the Roumanian troubles over. The banished lady went straight to Sofia, where she joined the revolutionary committee, and is the leader in their councils. It is certain that, even if King Charles reigns unmolested, his successor will find a great difficulty in keeping his throne safe for himself and his wife, Princess Marie.

Speaking of Roumania, it is interesting to note that the son of Princess Marie is the only surviving hope of the Stuart faction—now, happily, almost dead. In fact, we may rest assured that little Prince Carol never gives a thought to his unfortunate ancestor, Charles I., or to the great empire in store for him, as planned by the few remaining Jacobites.

As shaky as any monarch on his throne is the King of the Belgians. Here there are, amongst others, many religious troubles, combined with a certain amount of Anarchism and an immense amount of Socialism, especially in the capital itself.

So great is the feeling against the king and government that the possibility of Leopold's abdication is talked of in official circles.

With Austro-Hungary the racial differences are to be dealt with. Here are so many and varied people, the Huns and the Gothic element mingled together, that, with the death of the reigning monarch, battle, murder, and rapine seem only too probable. The Emperor Franz Joseph is himself loved by all his subjects, to whatever nationality they may belong; but this love is limited to the Emperor alone.

Here Austria is likened to Norway and Sweden, its safety and unity depending entirely on the personality of the sovereign.

Not only is the throne of Turkey in a very precarious condition but the empire also. In the last thirty years or so Sultan Abdul Hamid

Photo by Pasetti, and supplied by The Press Picture Agency.

Grand Duke Vladimir, the champion of the Slavists, who hopes to be Tsar of Russia one day.

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has seen his empire slowly crumbling away. Egypt is gone, and Tunis—the first to England, the second to France. After the disastrous war with Russia, Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Montenegro were forfeited. Thessaly and Crete, Cyprus and many thousand square miles of Armenian territory have also been ceded to the various great powers; a very volume of misfortunes, enough to drive any ruler to abdication.

However, so far, the Sultan has held firmly on to his throne, and put down the manifold disasters which surround him to fate, with true Oriental calm. But it is to be feared further storms are brooding for him.

During the first years of his reign Sultan Abdul Hamid convoked a parliament and opened it with great pomp. However, this parliament was, like the parliaments to our own earlier kings, a thorn in his flesh, and, after its expiration, His Majesty, somehow or other, failed to convoke another parliament, and ruled by himself.

Owing to this somewhat arbitrary juris-

Photo by Mándy.

King Charles of Roumania, against whose throne is the Revolutionary Committee.

diction, the greatest dissatisfaction prevails in Turkey and, by the flight of the Sultan's brother Mahmoud Pasha, has been doubled.

To keep the empire together and to have some hand on the people in the event of an insurgent rising, the Sultan has followed the advice of the Kaiser, and changed the succession from his brother to his son, Prince Mohammed Burhaneddin Effendi, a lad of fifteen.

The direct heir to the throne, Reched, the Sultan's brother, is a fanatic—morose and gloomy, and a most undesirable ruler, as far as the interests of commerce and progress are concerned.

The young Prince Mohammed is, however, being educated by European tutors and, brought up with European ideas and ideals, will, in all probability, be a good and wise ruler, and perhaps restore to Turkey her old high status amongst the great powers. But at present, so great a feeling is there in the country against the Sultan and his house that

Photo by London Stereoscopic Co.

King Leopold of Belgium, whose life is hardly safe from the Socialists of Brussels.

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it is doubtful if the young prince will ever come to his succession.

But worse than Turkey, with its fanaticism and Armenian tragedies, worse than Spain, torn in twain by the Carlists, or Belgium, wracked by Socialist and Anarchist movements, is Bulgaria.

Here are crimes committed by those in the highest places, and here is taxation and oppression more rampant than in any country in the world.

And the cause of all the trouble is the ruler himself. Not only has Prince Ferdinand been refused admittance to all the best courts of Europe, not only is the country on the eve of rebellion against him, but the Macedonian patriots have all taken a solemn oath to slay him, and have refused to pay any further taxes to their unscrupulous sovereign.

At one time Prince Ferdinand was one of the wealthiest rulers in Europe, but now he has thrown away his own fortune and that of his mother, Princess Clementine of Coburg.

One of the greatest crimes of the last century was the murder of the Bulgarian minister, Stambuloff. Of course, no charge of connivance to the murder may be made against the sovereign, but it is odd that Ferdinand made no attempts to punish the assassin.

Photo by Pietzner.

The Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria, probably the last of the Hapsbergs.

Photo by Uhlenhuth.

Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, against whom the whole country is rising.

Photo by Downey.

The Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey, whose empire is rapidly disappearing before his eyes.

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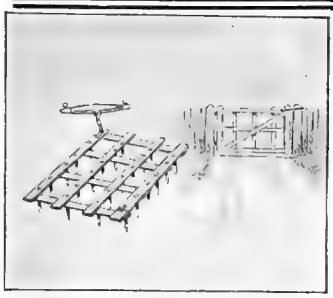
3rd Set of Pictures.

5s. a Day for Life!



CORRECT SOLUTION: HARROGATE.
INCORRECT SOLUTIONS: (1) HARROW: Because it comprises fewer letters than Harrogate. (2) GATE (for same reason).

All competitors should carefully read the conditions.

A UNIQUE PRIZE OFFERED TO MAGAZINE READERS.

4 points to remember:

(1) That the prize of 5s. a Day for Life will *not* be divided—it will be won outright by *one* person (perhaps *you*).

(2) That the sum of £100 will be divided amongst those who come next.

(3) That no attempts should be sent in until the closing date is announced in the *Royal*.

(4) That those competitors who were unable to obtain copies of the *Royal*, containing the first two sets of pictures, may secure them, *free of cost*, on sending a penny stamp (to cover postage) to the Competition Editor, *Royal Magazine*, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C.

What you have to do - - - -

ON THE NEXT PAGE you will find twelve pictures. Each of these pictures consists of a certain number of objects. These objects, either singly or collectively, represent the name of a town or place in the United Kingdom.

What you have to do is to find the town or place with the longest name entirely from the names of objects depicted in each picture (or from their phonetic equivalents).

An "object" does not include sky or shading necessary for correct drawing.

Before you begin, carefully examine the example shown here, which will make the matter clear.

Taking this as a guide, you have now to examine the twelve pictures on the next page, and discover the name of the town or place which each of them represents. When you have done this, write the name down in the space provided, and keep the pages by you.

☞ **Another set of pictures will appear in the August number of the *Royal*. The closing date will also be announced in that number.**

CONDITIONS.

1. The names must be clearly written in ink. (*Use a fine pen*).

2. Only one name is allowed under each picture.

3. No alterations are to be allowed in the words. If you have made a mistake in the spelling, cross the word out and write it again.

4. When you have filled up your list, cut it out and **keep it by you until you are told to send it in.**

5. You may forward as many sets of pages as you like. Each set will be accepted independently, and the pages composing it must be pinned together.

6. The name of the place with the greatest number of letters depicted in each picture is the correct solution, but if there are two or more such names of places depicted in one picture with an equal number of letters, then each will be counted correct.

7. No competitor may receive the assistance of professional competition solvers who send out circulars, or whose advertisements appear in the Press. Every person who enters for this competition must do so only on this understanding, and winners will be asked to satisfy us that they have not contravened this condition.

8. In the event of a tie a further, or, if necessary, several further, sets of pictures will be submitted to the tieing competitors, until one shall win the prize outright.

9. The first prize—that is, 5s. per day for life—will be payable monthly to the winner, who shall not be entitled to require that it be capitalised.

- - THE PRIZE OF 5s. A DAY FOR LIFE - -

Will be given to the competitor from whom the Editor of the *Royal Magazine* receives a set of pages containing the greatest number of correct solutions.

The sum of **£100** will be divided, at the discretion of the Editor, amongst those who come next.

All the names depicted in the sketches will be found as printed in the list of Provincial Post Offices in the Post Office Guide, which may be consulted at any Post Office, or may be purchased for 6d.

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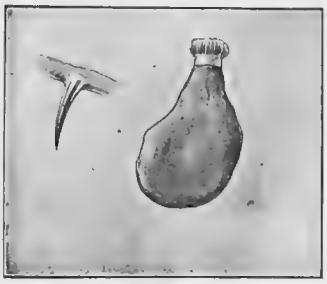

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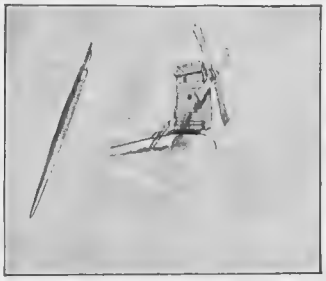

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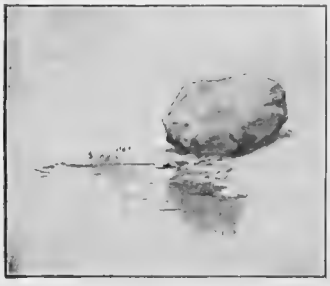

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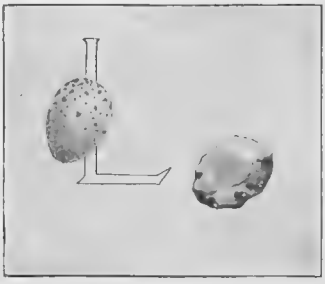

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Name..... *Address*.....

Keep all your sets of pictures by you until the competition is finished.

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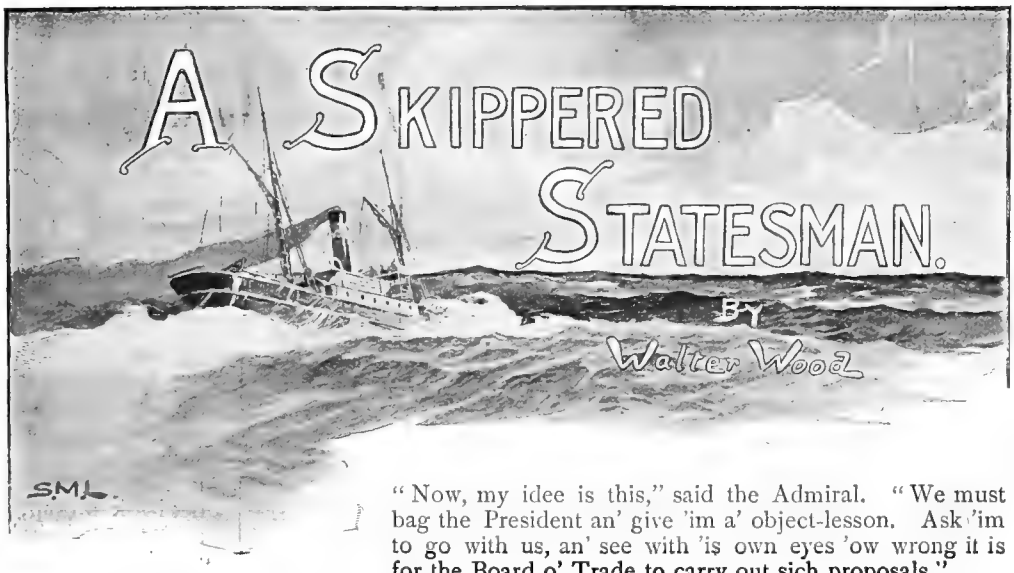

"Now, my idee is this," said the Admiral. "We must bag the President an' give 'im a' object-lesson. Ask 'im to go with us, an' see with 'is own eyes 'ow wrong it is for the Board o' Trade to carry out sich proposals."

The Admiral looked at his companions, North Sea skippers, most of whom commanded smacks that fished with the fleet of which he was the head. Just now the Admiral was ashore for a week, and he was greatly agitated about a proposal by the authorities to alter the regulations governing the fishing lights. He expected that his hearers would enthusiastically support his scheme; but all remained silent except one, named Barnes, who said: "Before you can fry your fish you must catch it."

"I'm not talkin' about fryin' fish," replied the Admiral shortly.

"Well, you're talkin' about roastin' a Cabinet Minister, aren't you?" asked Barnes.

"Nor yet that," said the Admiral. "What I mean is, exercise persuasion. Ask him to take a trip to sea with us."

"An' suppose 'e won't go?"

"Well, then, we'll reason with 'im."

"'Ow?"

"Lure 'im on board an' take 'im with us."

"But that 'ud be worse nor roastin'; it 'ud be kidnappin'," protested Barnes.

"Ridic'lus!" exclaimed the Admiral. "Who ever 'eard o' a grown man bein' kidnapped? That description applies to childer."

"Never mind," said Barnes; "kidnappin', or mannappin', or womannappin', *I'm* not goin' in for it. No fear."

"The p'int is this," continued the Admiral. "'Ere's a President o' the Board o' Trade takin' a summer 'oliday by the sea-shore. 'E's a man 'at 'as in mind a scheme. Wot scheme? A scheme to alter the fishin' lights an' put the poor fisherman's life in danger. This President, wishin' for the best, is jes' got at by interested parties, by ignorant parties; an' unless 'e's got at by us 'e'll sign papers an' put the new fishin' lights into law."

"Let 'im!" snapped Barnes. "What does it matter if the lights *are* altered? We shall get used to 'em."

"It matters this," answered the Admiral, "that you break yer neck over yer own principles, so to speak. Your principles are, not to allow a landsman to alter your fishin' lights, a man who doesn't understand 'em; an' this the President isn't goin' to do if I can stop it. All those in favour o' givin' the President a object-lesson say 'aye.'"

There was no answer. "Carried unanimous," the Admiral declared, "forasmuch as silence gives consent, an' there's no opposition."

Before his hearers could make remark he continued: "Now that we've agreed to do it, the p'int is, in what way? My idee is this:—The President is fond o' wanderin' about the 'arbour an' doin' a bit o' reflectin' an' fishin' from a boat, an' so on. Well, we get 'im on board the *Eagle* an' to come below to receive a deppytation. *We're* that

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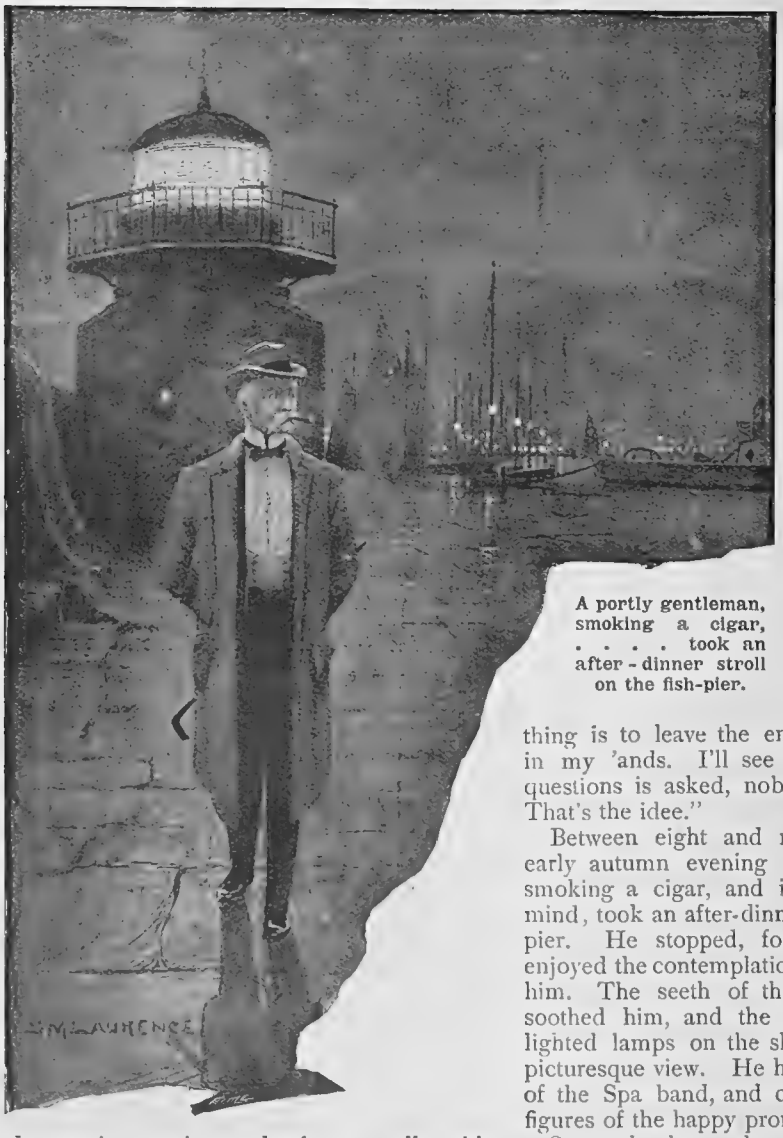

A portly gentleman, smoking a cigar, ... took an after-dinner stroll on the fish-pier.

deppytation, an' we begin to talk with 'im. While we're talkin' the *Eagle's* got out to sea, an' we take a trip. By mornin', mark my words, that President's come to our way o' thinkin', an' then we can put 'im ashore. There's a nice swell runnin' outside, an' if 'e's never seen any rats or beetles—well, 'e'll see 'em now. What do you say?"

The obnoxious skipper said "Rats!" and the rest went on listening.

"There's no danger," continued the Admiral; "an' as for the risk, I'll take it all."

"In that case," said Barnes, "I'll join in with you. Possibly the sport will be worth the cost o' runnin' the *Eagle* out; besides, we can get the trawl down. You were goin' out wi' the night tide, weren't you, Jack?"

Jack, the mate of the *Eagle*, a screw trawler, said she was, and that she meant to return in the morning, if possible, as the market was short of fish.

"Then be on board at nine o'clock sharp," said the Admiral, "an' at that hour I'll produce the President. I've been studyin' 'is 'abits, an' know where to find 'im. Now, the main thing is to leave the engineerin' o' the case in my 'ands. I'll see it through. If any questions is asked, nob'dy knows anything. That's the idee."

Between eight and nine o'clock in the early autumn evening a portly gentleman, smoking a cigar, and in a happy state of mind, took an after-dinner stroll on the fish-pier. He stopped, folded his arms, and enjoyed the contemplation of the scene before him. The seeth of the surf on the beach soothed him, and the long sweep of the lighted lamps on the shore afforded him a picturesque view. He heard the faint music of the Spa band, and could almost see the figures of the happy promenaders.

Seaward, where a large steamer had been beached, a cluster of lights marked a fleet of cobbles which were relieving the wreck of her cargo of coal. Fore and aft were red lights to mark the wreck; alongside were strong lights to mark the cobbles, and near her was a tug with her two masthead-lights and side-lights burning. She was towing uselessly at the wreck, and the solitary man found the clanking of her paddles an agreeable and soothing sound. The water looked soft and luminous, and the faint "Hallos" and other cries of the cobblemen completed his satisfaction.

"What an extraordinary number of

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lights!" he thought. "What do they all mean? Now, how very singular that a man like me, who has the power to alter them, should know nothing about them. Very strange—very; but not so strange as that men who don't know any more should control the Navy and Army. How preposterous of Craigie, for instance, to be meddling with Army reform; and how ridiculous of Money to talk so glibly about battleships and other things he doesn't understand. And how feeble-kneed they are! They cave in on the slightest public clamour. Now *I*—I am inflexible. I would no sooner think of altering my determination about the fishing lights than I should think of flying. Wild horses couldn't force me to——"

His reverie was interrupted by the approaching Admiral, who, joining him with a courteous "Good evening, sir," observed that it was fine weather, and that he had no doubt that the gentleman was thinking what a glorious time the fishermen must have.

The President was gracious. The Admiral gave no sign of being aware of his distinguished position in life, and it pleased him to assume the rôle of an intelligent and humble visitor. If he did that, the revelation of his true greatness would be all the more effective and dramatic. "I think it must be very delightful on the sea," he answered. "To an observant person the study of the habits of fish and marine life must be improving and interesting."

"You won't find a smacksman troublin' about the fish," replied the Admiral, "except to wonder 'ow much it'll fetch, an' whether there'll be a fair lot o' prime or a lot o' offal. Prime is the good sort—sole an' turbot and sich like, an' offal's—well, offal's muck, to put it mildly. As for 'abits, all fish 'as a very bad 'abit nowadays o' runnin' away at the sight o' a trawl. They're that cunnin' there's no catchin' 'em. Do you know, sir, that many a bit o' fishin' ground that used to be a gold mine is fished dry, an' that before you can get a decent 'aul you must sometimes go as far to the Nowth as Iceland?"

"Dear me!" exclaimed the President. "How very singular!"

"Soon," said the Admiral, "if things go on like this, we shall be chasin' 'em on skates round the Nowth Pole."

The President laughed. "Quite a humorous person, in a rude way," he thought. "You are, of course," he said aloud, "a fisherman yourself?"

"Admiral o' the Fleet," said his companion. "That is, I'm the 'ead of eighty or ninety smacks 'at are fleetin', just now, off 'Eligoland. I'm ashore for a week, restin' a bit; then I shall go out for eight or ten weeks; that's the programme—eight or ten weeks at sea to six or seven days ashore.

"Yes, yes," said the President pompously. "I'm not without knowledge of the mode of life of our fishermen."

"Ah! indeed, sir, then you've been to sea to see 'em?" asked the Admiral.

"Not exactly that; but I've studied the subject from the shore."

"A lot of 'em do that, sir," observed the Admiral. "It's safer."

"The fact is, I'm eh—ah—er—the Pres——"

"Ever on board a smack, sir?" interrupted the Admiral hastily.

For reasons of his own he wished to appear to be ignorant of the President's identity.

"Never," replied the President, somewhat piqued at the interruption; but he was mollified when he recollected that the revelation would be all the better for keeping.

"Would you like to step on board a fine trawler, sir—just to look round? 'Ere's the *Eagle*, as sharp an' strong as 'er name, just at our feet, so to speak. Come, sir, I'll take you on board. I know the skipper—Old Tom, we call 'im—an 'e'll be pleased to see you. P'raps, sir, you might be a missionary, anxious to learn?"

The Admiral spoke interrogatively.

"I'm not a missionary," replied the stout gentleman loftily. "I'm the Pres——"

"Mind the gangway, sir, and don't fall into the 'arbour," said the Admiral, again interrupting. He had already led his companion to the *Eagle's* side, and was stepping on board. "This way, sir, an' mind your legs," added the Admiral, with extraordinary geniality. "Now we'll go below, sir, an' begin at the end—that is to say, we'll work for'ard from aft; starn to stem. Ha, ha!"

"What a very interesting experience," thought the President.

He graciously allowed himself to be conducted to the cabin of the *Eagle*. For a few seconds he was unable to make out his surroundings, because the air was dense with tobacco smoke, and the cabin was lighted only by a small oil lamp. When the visitor could distinguish things he saw that the cabin was full of solemn men, who were seated round the table, wedged in between its edges and the sides of the vessel. They had so far been faithful to the Admiral, and had turned

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up on board the *Eagle* in obedience to his instructions.

"Why, bless me!" exclaimed the Admiral. "What's all this?" He spoke in affected astonishment.

"Come in, old Skipper," said Barnes. "It's only a deppytation."

"A deppytation?" asked the Admiral. "Whatever for?"

"To see about the fishin' lights. We're goin' to see the 'Arbour Commissioners first, an' then they'll see the Government man."

"Of all the extryordinary things!" exclaimed the Admiral. "That we should come on board the *Eagle*, lookin' round, an' find a deppytation! Well, sir," he said, turning to the visitor, "you must take us as you find us, an' excuse us."

The visitor became vastly interested. It was, he thought, a notable occasion in his life. Here he was in actual personal communication with the honest fishermen of whom he had heard so much.

"On their hearths, in their own homes, so to speak," he murmured. "A striking picture. Children of Nature; rude Sons of the Ocean. A scene requiring the pencil of Rembrandt to depict"

Aloud he said, adapting his public-speaking voice to the confined limits of the cabin: "Gentlemen, you mention fishing-lights and a deputation. It is an astonishing coincidence that the very Minister you desire to see should be so near you. I am the Pres—— What in the world is wrong?"

As he was uttering the word "President" the *Eagle* gave a curious lurch.

"Just a tidal wave comin' in," replied the Admiral hurriedly. "Go on deck, Barnes, an' see if it isn't so."

Barnes left the cabin, forcing his way out with some difficulty. The President's portly form alone seemed almost to fill the little cabin comfortably.

The *Eagle* gave another lurch, and the President clung to the edge of the table.

"It is a most astonishing thing," he said.

"But not unusual—mere freak o' Nature," replied the Admiral. "The waves often come in like this. You see, sir, they come nosin' round the foot o' the 'ill an' liftin' the little fishin' craft up. There was once a tidal wave came in which caught a steamboat, just as it might be the *Eagle*, at her moorin's, swung 'er right round, an'——"

The *Eagle* lurched again.

"I really must go upstairs," said the President. "To a landsman this motion is—eh—rather trying."

"Won't you see the steamboat first, sir? The fish-room, an' the injun-room, an'——" began the Admiral.

"Not to-night, thank you," said the visitor politely. "Good evening, gentlemen, I really must get out of this hot room. Bless my soul! What's happening?"

He made another clutch at the table, and supported himself as the *Eagle* gave a long plunge.

Barnes tumbled into the cabin.

"Well, of all the funny things!" he exclaimed, "If Old Tom hasn't let go his ropes an' got clear o' the 'arbour! I never did! An' wi' a deppytation in his cabin, too."

"Left the harbour!" cried the visitor. "Tell him to go back instantly, and let me get on land."

In his consternation he rushed on deck and climbed on to the bridge, the Admiral following him, and the deputation hurrying up from the cabin also.

"Stop this ship at once, and let me get out," ordered the visitor.

The skipper gave the wheel a twirl, but did not answer.

"Do you hear me, sir?" clamoured the visitor. "Put back at once!"

"You get down off my bridge," said the skipper. He gave another twirl of the wheel.

"Are you aware, sir, that I'm the President of the Board of Trade?" demanded the passenger.

"An' that there's a deppytation in the cabin?" asked the Admiral in feigned severity.

"*I* didn't ask the President o' the Board o' Trade to come on board," said the skipper; "an' 'ow was I to know there was a deppytation? Wot right has a deppytation to squat in my cabin?"

"You really must put me on the pier," said the President. "I insist upon it. Are you turning back?" He did his best to speak inflexibly, but the trembling in his voice betrayed his nervousness. Already the *Eagle* was in the full swing of the swell, and the President imagined that she was in peril of foundering.

"Did you see that flash in the light-house?" asked the skipper. "Well, it's gone out. That means there's no water in the 'arbour, so I can't go back if I wished. An' I don't wish, so I'm not goin'. You just make yourself comfortable till to-morrer mornin', then I'll put you ashore an' give you a string o' nice fish for Mrs. President an' the

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misses an' master Presidents." The skipper laughed. "As for the deppytation," he added, "they can give a 'and at gettin' in the trawl an' cleanin' an' packin' the fish. I'll teach deppytations to come an' squat in *my* cabin, unbeknown to me."

"If you insist on taking me to sea," said the President, "you must take the consequences. They will be serious."

"I'll take 'em all on," answered the skipper. "My mind's easy. *I* didn't ask you to come."

"What a horrible little ship!" exclaimed the President.

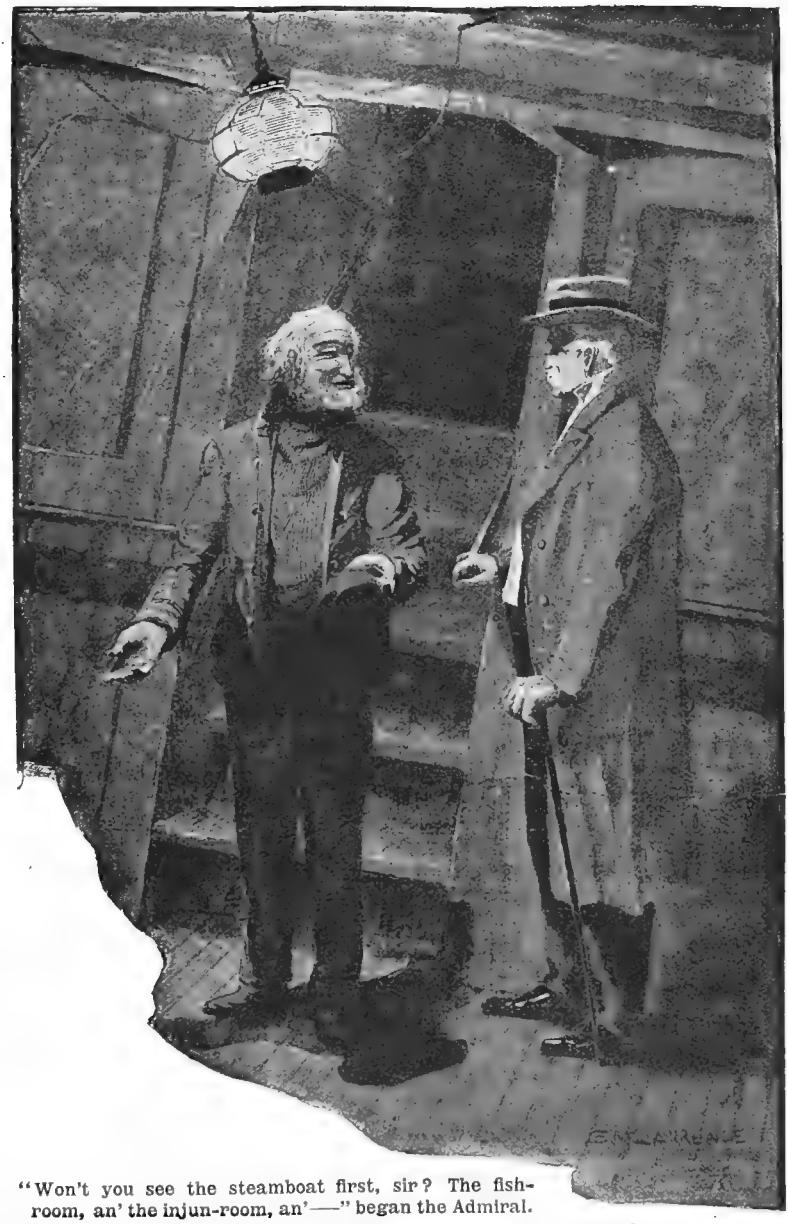
The *Eagle* was running, as it seemed to him, up the long side of a hill and down the other.

"Well, well," said the Admiral, taking pity on the passenger somewhat, and trying to steady him. "We must make the best of it. As for us, it don't matter; an' as for you, sir—well, consider 'at you're a missionary an' 'ave come out in the good o' the cause; that is to say, you've come to see the lights with your own eyes. An' the deppytation with you, sir. It's like the crowner and the jury goin' to see the body, isn' it, sir? Well, talkin' about the fishin' lights——"

"The fishing lights be hanged!" exclaimed the President. "I must go downstairs at once."

Willing hands were laid upon him, and willing voices asked him if there was any article or comfort that he needed. By way of answer the President groaned and made strange noises, and intimated that all he wished for was to lie down and be left alone.

"Will you lay on the table, or in a bunk, or on the floor, sir?" asked the Admiral. "I can recommend the floor—an' if you're lashed to the table-leg you'll find the motion not so vi'lent. The *Eagle* is rayther



"Won't you see the steamboat first, sir? The fish-room, an' the injun-room, an'——" began the Admiral.

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frolicsome, isn't she? Bless you, it's only her birdlike way."

They led the President to the cabin, and he sank upon a locker. "Leave me," he said, and they left him, after giving him a couple of dark, coarse blankets from a fearsome-looking bunk.

"If you ask me," said the Admiral, returning to the bridge, "things are prosperin'. 'E's as sick as a babby, an' by mornin' we can convince him o' anything. But I've got another little scheme on. The wind's risin,' an' there's goin' to be a bit o' a breeze. Now, then, Old Tom, just let the *Eagle* go—let 'er roll an' pitch just as 'ard as she likes. Let a big sea or two come on board, 'an knock 'er about."

"All right," said the skipper. "You take the responsibility. I'm on at a bit o' playfulness."

"Quite so—it's only our jocociousness," replied the Admiral. "As for responsibility, they can't fix it on anybody, it's so well distribbyted. Besides, if there's to be law, we shall ha' to go to law, too, to get his fare. Now, then, lads, listen to me. But let's go below, an' then the President can't 'ear us."

The Admiral led the way into the fish-room and there perfected his plan for what he called the conversion of the President.

"When the wind's at its worst," he said, "an' Old Tom noses 'er into a big sea, the cabin skylight must be opened an' the hatch left back. Then the cabin'll be flooded an' things'll be awash, an' the President'll think 'is time's come. Then there'll be loud shouts, as if we saw a steamboat a-comin', an' then we'll make out 'at we've been nigh lost because that steamboat's showin' the new lights—by mistake, of course. If the President don't leave the *Eagle* a cured man in the way o' fishin' lights, it won't be for want o' doctors."

At three o'clock in the morning, when the solitary occupant of the cabin lay breathing heavily, in a troubled doze, he was roused by fearful cries and tumult. He was wedged on the locker, between the table and a bunk; but the *Eagle* gave such a terrific leap and roll that he was thrown to the floor. Almost at the same instant there was a crash on the deck, the scream of the racing screw, and a deluge of salt water. It came down the companion like a little avalanche, and burst through the open skylight. The lamp went out, and the fire, which had burned low, was extinguished with a hissing sound.

For a moment the President thought that all was lost. Struggling in the water and the darkness, he shouted for help. None came. Instead he heard a voice at the skylight.

"Make the 'atch snug," shouted the Admiral, "and bring some fish-trunks to lash over the skylight. Hello, sir!" This was in answer to the President's call. "No, you can't come up—it's too risky. Stop there, sir, we'll look after you. Eh? No lights, an' you want comp'ny? 'Ere, Barnes, you go below an' comfort 'im. Cheer up, sir, it'll soon be daylight, an' the sun'll shine again sometime. Now, then, Barnes, look alive!"

The skipper was pushed into the cabin, and, with the President, was battened down. "Well, sir, if she *does* go down, you'll 'ave comp'ny," said Barnes.

"Go down!" echoed the President.

"Many's the steamboat 'at's gone down in the North Sea," answered Barnes, who was lighting the lamp and his pipe with the same match. "The steamboat's yet to be built that's immortal."

The President, in his soaking blankets, shivering with cold, and utterly miserable, crawled back to his resting-place, and listened to the roar of wind and sea. He dozed, and was unaware that Barnes had left the cabin and returned to the deck until he heard further commotion. "What's the matter?" he shouted, frantic with alarm. He climbed on to the table, so that his head was just under the skylight. Near him he heard the voice of the Admiral.

"Matter?" answered the Admiral. "Why, we've been nearly sent to the bottom by a lunatic that's got the new fishin' lights showin'—like a floatin' firework shop. Says 'e's seen 'em in the papers, an' that they're law."

"Let me out," demanded the President. "I refuse to be boxed up in this terrible hole any longer. If the ship is to sink I'd rather be on deck."

"She won't sink—not yet, at any rate," replied the Admiral. "If she begins to go, I'll come an' let you out, sir. But you're a deal comfortabler there at present."

He withdrew, and for the rest of the night the unhappy President lay and rolled on the cabin floor, regardless of dignity, and almost defying danger. As the dawn broke the wind fell, and the motion of the *Eagle* became less erratic. The unnerving noises also ceased, and when at last the Admiral appeared in the cabin there was comparative calm. He found the President wrapped in his blankets. He moved uncomfortably in his wet clothes.

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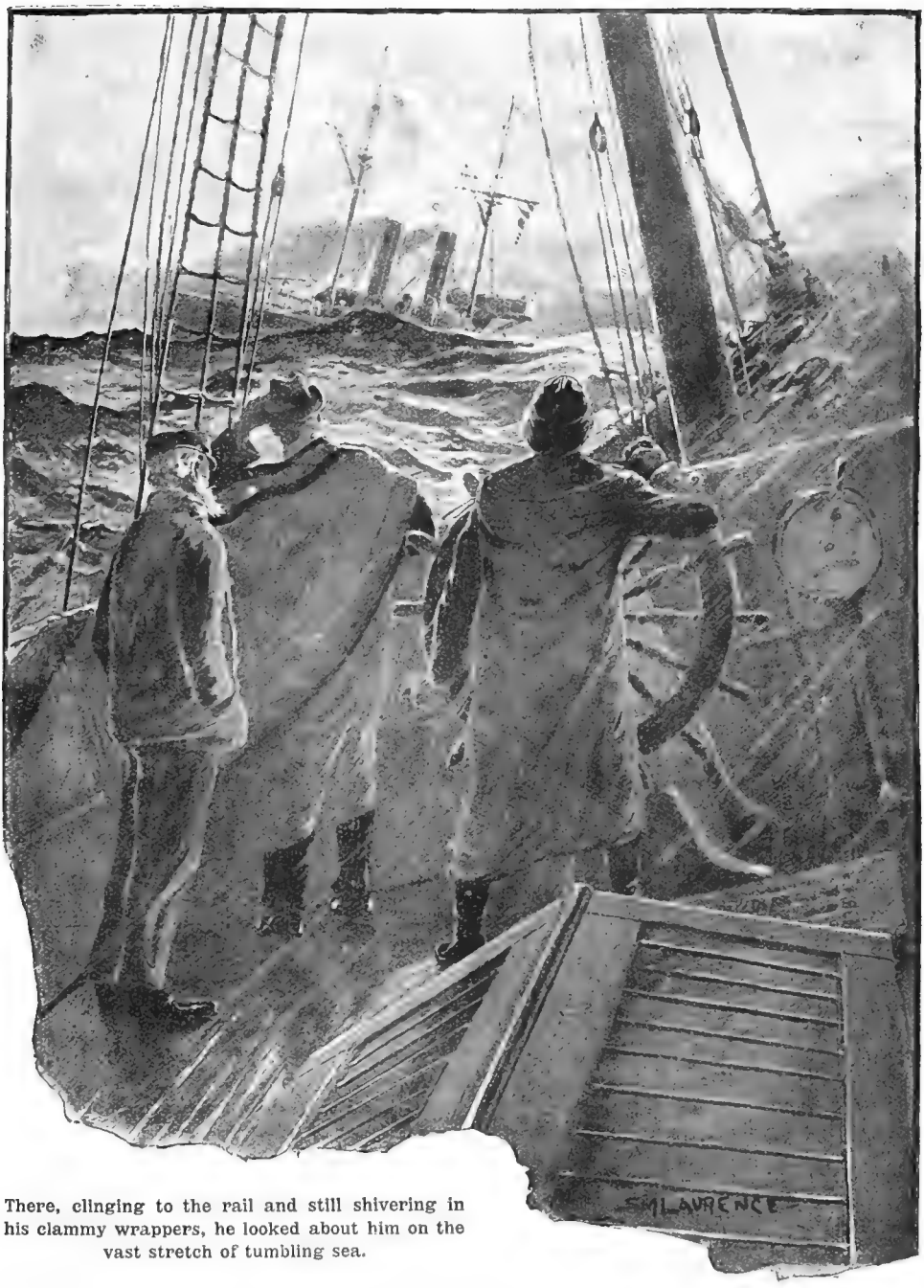

There, clinging to the rail and still shivering in his clammy wrappers, he looked about him on the vast stretch of tumbling sea.

"Is it the salt water, sir?" inquired the Admiral compassionately.

"Salt water's rather damp," replied the President sadly.

"Oh," said the Admiral, "never mind, you'll soon get used to it, sir. It allus bothers fresh 'ands. Would you like to step on deck an' look round? There's no danger now."

With help from the Admiral, however, and some severe bruising he got as far as the little bridge, and there, clinging to the rail

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and still shivering in his clammy wrappers, he looked about him on the vast stretch of tumbling sea. It was a cheerless and depressing sight, but the President began to pick himself up with amazing quickness in the keen air. When the Admiral suggested hot coffee and toast and bacon he almost smiled, and said he thought he would.

The Admiral, with the full approval of Old Tom, had passed the order to the cook when the President, who had been looking about him again, pointed over the bows to a ship and said: "What's that?"

"What's that?" repeated the Admiral. "That's the gunboat—the Fisheries Protection gunboat that is, sir. She's been dancin' about there for some time. Would you, as a Gover'ment person, like to be put aboard, sir?"

He clung to the rail as he spoke, for the *Eagle* soared up a wave like the bird whose namesake she was. Simultaneously the gunboat wallowed in a hollow.

"If you'd like us to get the boat out an' ferry you across, say the word, sir," continued the Admiral, "an' it shall be done."

The President stared. "The boat out! In a sea like this?" he asked, amazed.

"An' why not?" demanded the Admiral. "Why, it's only a bit of a swell, follerin' nat'rally on the slight breeze we've inj'yed in the night. Come, my lads, lend a 'and wi' the boat—the gentleman wants ferryin' to the gunboat."

"Right, old skipper," answered several voices.

"Would you, sir," inquired the Admiral, "like a lifebelt round you, or will you trust to us? Or would you rather we asked the gunboat to send for you?"

"I will neither go nor be sent for," vowed the President. "I never heard of such a proposal. A boat! In a sea like this!" He gasped, and clung more tightly to the rail, as if he thought an organised attempt would be made to pluck him from his hold.

"You'd be comfortabler on board the gunboat," said the Admiral; "an' don't consider us, sir. To ferry you over is no more nor ferryin' a trunk o' fish. It's part o' our daily life. No? Well, then, sir, we'll put about an' run for home—eh, Old Tom?"

"We'd better," answered the skipper. "There's been precious little sport to-night, sir," he added, addressing the President. "There's been no chance o' gettin' the trawl down. They tell me, sir, 'at you reely came out to see wi' your own eyes what the new fishin' lights 'ud do—what a danger they'd be. Well, sir, if you ask me, I think you're a well plucked 'un. It's not every man 'at could 'a stood the knockin' about as you've done. Now you begin to be yourself, sir, an' to look as you should do—well an' earty."

The President began to recover rapidly. Here was a very excellent way out of any difficulty, and he accepted it. He had no wish to appear either foolish or ridiculous, and he promptly determined that he would indeed pose as an adventurous seeker after light.

"It is certainly advisable," he remarked, "that when a responsible Minister has the opportunity of collecting first-hand and visual evidence, he should take advantage of it."

"You've stood it like a 'ero, sir," said the Admiral; "an' now the breakfast's ready in the cabin. It's early, but you'll be ready for another by the time you're put ashore."

The President went below, and did justice to himself and the meal. By the time the harbour was reached again—about eight o'clock—he had fully recovered his spirits and amiability. He was, besides, inordinately proud of his achievement, feeling that he was no longer a mere layman in the matter of fishing lights, but an expert.

"I suppose, Admiral," he said, as he shook hands on the pier, "that every new member of the crew must pay his footing? Besides there's the damage done by the storm, and the loss of the night's fishing. Here's a note which I hope will cover it all and help you to remember me."

"And in the matter o' the fishin' lights, sir?" inquired the Admiral.

"Gentlemen," replied the President, "on that subject I hope to make a public announcement shortly. Good-bye."

The President did. Replying to a question in the House—to quote from a newspaper report—he said:

"With regard to the inquiry by my honourable and gallant friend, I may say that I recently took a trip in a steam trawler (hear, hear) with the desire to see with my own eyes, and hear with my own ears. I did both (cheers). After a stormy—I might say hazardous—night, in which I had the opportunity of gaining first-hand evidence of the danger of a change—for we narrowly escaped a collision in the darkness—I have come to the conclusion that it is inexpedient to alter the fishing lights, and they will accordingly remain as they are (cheers)."

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WORTH A KING'S RANSOM

The Illustrations show the stones their natural size.

An account of some of the most valuable diamonds in the world.

By Livesey Neville.

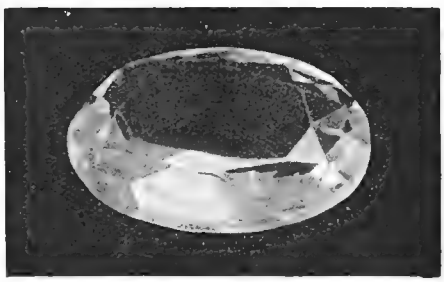
From ancient times, from the earliest days of civilisation, precious stones have been sought after with greed and avidity. At first they were mere trinkets, things to please the eye, but soon, from being ornaments only, their value was greatly enhanced, and they were regarded on an equal footing with gold in the treasuries of the great. How far, and to what extent of crime men and women would go to possess these gems is only too well known.

The diamond enjoys the reputation of being the most precious of all jewels, and this, though, possibly, a fallacy, is bound to go a long way in securing for it its great popularity. In the bygone days the great sources of diamond production were the mines of Golconda and Bundelcund in India, many of the most famous diamonds having their origin there. Later on, Brazil and the East Indies produced some fine specimens, Borneo being particularly conspicuous; but to-day the greatest supply comes from South Africa.

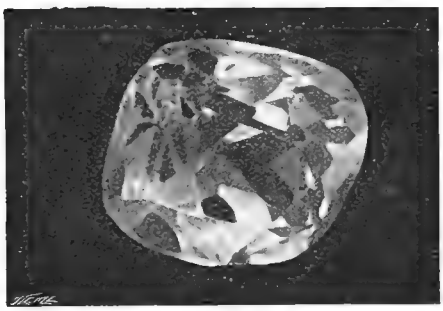
The first diamond discovered there was in 1867, near the Vaal River, north of Kimberley, or rather where Kimberley now stands. The news spread, and thousands came to the river, which since then has yielded great profits. Three years later, stones were found at De Beer's Farm, Dutoit's Pan, and Bulfontein, in the Orange River Colony; again, in the neighbourhood of Coles Kop further east. The various mines were shortly afterwards amalgamated by the late Cecil Rhodes into the De Beers Consolidated Mines.

The celebrated Koh-i-noor diamond, now in the possession of our Royal House, is an Indian gem. We can trace its wanderings, with perfect authenticity, back one thousand

The Koh-i-noor, as it was first cut, weighed 168 carats.



The Koh-i-noor, as it now stands amongst the Crown jewels, weighs 106 carats and is valued at £140,000



The Orloff, the chief jewel in the Russian Imperial sceptre, is the largest cut diamond in the world. It weighs 194¾ carats, and cost Catherine II. £90,000 and an annuity of £4000.

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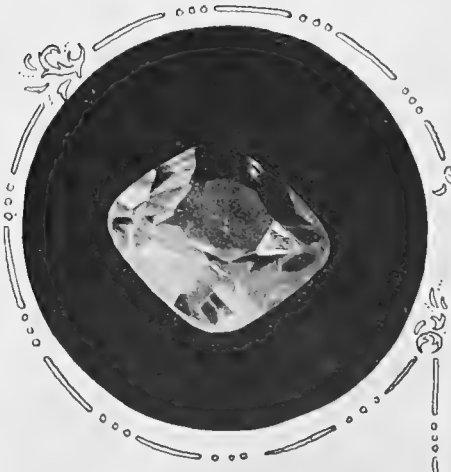


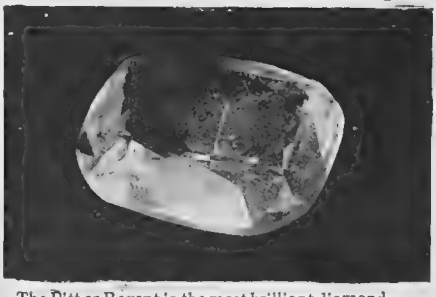
The Star of the South, found by a poor negro woman in 1853. Estimated value £80,000.

years, although native rumour declares that the stone dates back to 37 B.C. Its legendary origin, indeed, goes back five thousand years, when it was discovered in the bed of the Godiawery. It has been the prize of many a hard-conflict amongst the Hindoo Rajahs, the last of its owners giving it to the East India Company in 1849, by whom it was presented to Queen Victoria. Its replica in paste appears amongst the Crown jewels in the "Tower," yet it is not Crown property, but the private possession of King Edward. The Koh-i-noor will be set in front of the crown to be worn by the Queen at the coming Coronation, surrounded by lesser stones worth £250,000.

The Russian Imperial sceptre boasts the largest cut diamond in the world. The Orloff is also of Hindoo origin, and, like many other jewels of its kind, has graced, in the old days, the features of a sacred image. The story goes that it was stolen, by a clever subterfuge, by a French soldier, from the image of the god Scheringam, in the Temple of Brahma. It eventually, after many adventures, came into the hands of Catherine II. of Russia, who is reported to have given fourteen hundred thousand florins, in Dutch coin, for the beautiful stone.

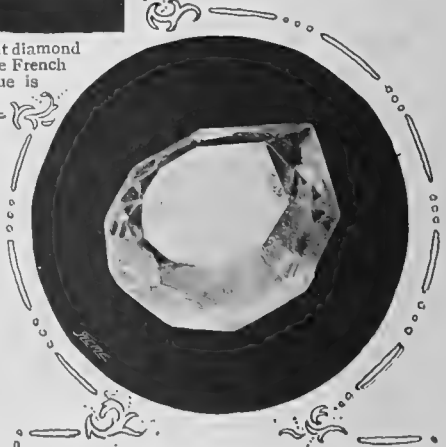
Though India boasts of the greatest number of diamonds of historic interest, Brazil has produced some wonderful specimens, amongst which may be mentioned the celebrated Star of the South. This stone is of a very delicate rose tint, and in the rough uncut state scaled two hundred and fifty-four carats. After being exhibited in London and Paris it was purchased by the Mahratta ruler of Baroda, for over eighty thousand pounds.

The Sancl, lost by the Duke of Burgundy at Marot in 1476. This gem has had a chequered career, and is now in the possession of the Sachsen-Attenburg House.



The Pitt or Regent is the most brilliant diamond in the world. It is the property of the French Government, and its estimated value is considerably over £100,000.

But for perfect form, purity, and brilliance, France can boast of the best specimen. The Duke of Orleans acquired the Regent whilst he was ruling during the minority of the young



The Austrian Yellow, lost, with the Sancl, at Marot, when found was presented by Pope Julius II. to Maria Theresa.

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Louis XV. It will be remembered that this jewel was pledged to the Dutch by the Government for money to carry on the Napoleonic wars, and afterwards redeemed. In 1792, with the celebrated blue Hope diamond, it was stolen, but eventually found its way back to the Parisian treasuries.

Two diamonds have been handed down to us, which were lost by Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, at the Battle of Marot in 1476, when the Duke lost all his luggage and valuable jewels. One, the Austrian Yellow, was, later on, presented to Marie Theresa by Pope Julius II. The other has a greater history.

This stone was picked up by a Swiss soldier and sold for a trifling sum to a French gentleman, Monsieur Sanci, from whom it takes its name. We have no record, of any authenticity, as to its former wanderings, but it is evident that the Sanci has glittered in many cities and at many courts.

In 1685 James II. sold it to Louis XIV., and the last we hear of it is that it was worn by Princess Mary of Sachsen Gottenberg at her marriage in Berlin.

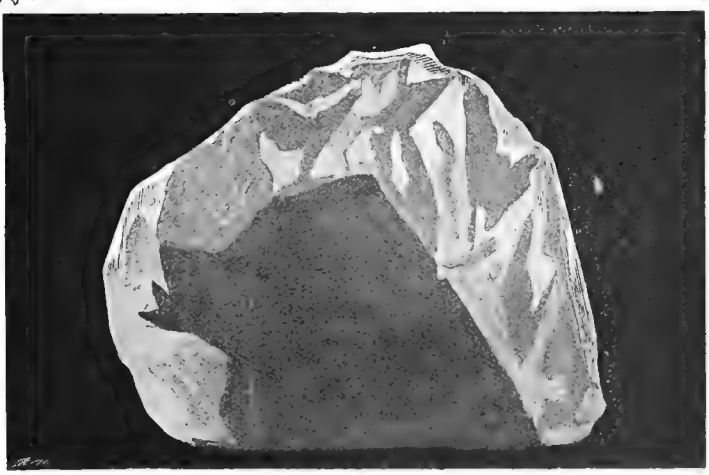
The Great Mogul, one of the largest diamonds in the world. It is worth £420,000.

The Nassak, an Indian gem from the Temple of Shiva. Its value is about £50,000

Of the Great Mogul comparatively little is known now. Its original weight was seven hundred and eighty-seven carats, but owing to flaws and faulty cuttings it has been reduced to two hundred and eighty-nine carats.

The Nassak is a smaller stone than the Mogul, its weight being only seventy-eight odd carats. A prize from the Temple of Shiva, in Nassak, it was handed over to the Marquis of Hastings, and eventually was worn by the Marquis of Westminster at a drawing-room on Queen Victoria's birthday.

From the African mines has come the largest authentic diamond ever discovered, measuring two and a half inches in length, and weighing nine hundred and sixty-nine carats. This gem, however, has been broken up into smaller specimens, and so has not gained any abnormal fame.



This was the largest diamond ever discovered. It has been broken up into smaller specimens. It came from the De Beers Mines.

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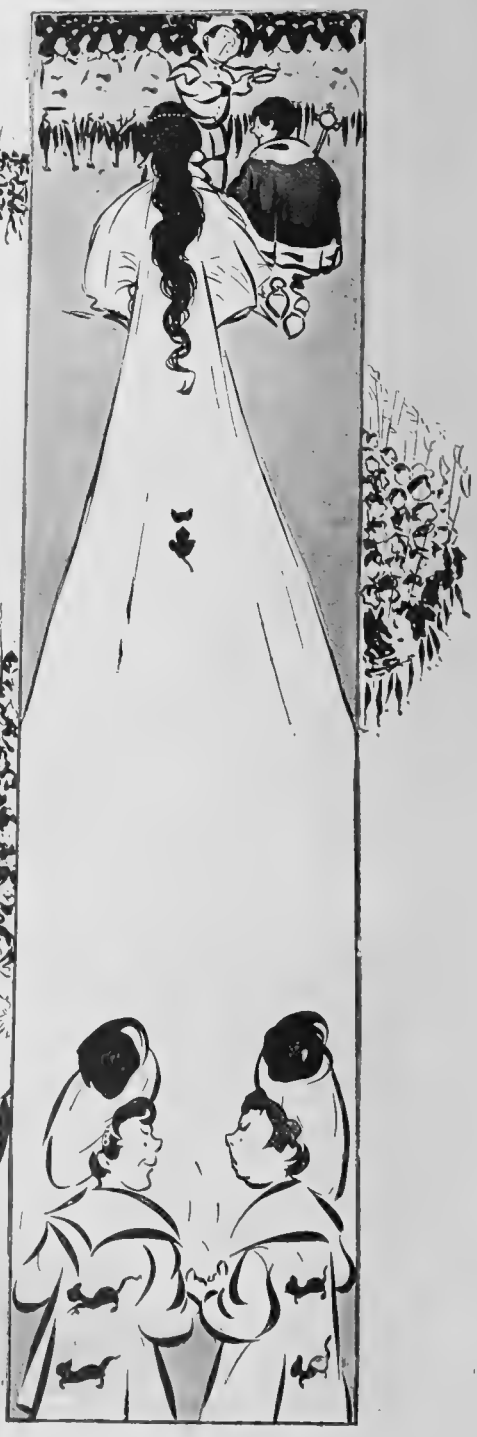
THE CORONATION IN DOLLYLAND

IN FOUR PAINTINGS.

"Ourselves."
After the famous painting by Sir Anthony Wax.



"Ourselves being Crowned."
After the picture by Sir Joshua Wooden.

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"Our Procession."
By Sir Biscuit China.

"Our Illuminations."
By Sir Samuel Sawdust.

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Chapeaugraphy For Ladies

A new and original entertainment for which a ring of felt, a dark cloak, and a little ingenuity are all that is necessary.

By C. Lang Neil.

Photographs posed by Mlle. Patrice.

In these days of competition and rush and scurry, every hostess, with the cares of the coming season heavy on her, is eagerly seeking some new form of amusement to spring on her guests, something original, something no one else has tried, newer even than ping-pong.

Here, then, is quite a new and really very interesting form of entertainment, requiring little preparation and no stage, or special room, and all so simple that it can be learned in a short time by anybody.

A ring of soft felt and a dark cloak supply the necessary costume, dress, and make-up, while a little ingenuity on the part of the performer will do the rest.

A dustman yelling his business along the London streets.

A coster exchanging pleasantries (?) in Billingsgate market.

This makes one think of "Chinaman no money makee allee lifee long," doesn't it?

In beginning, a few ordinary subjects should be studied, simple ones which will teach the tyro the proper use and manipulation of that mysterious piece of felt which forms the "chapeau." These will also afford ample practice in facial expressions and attitudes to be adopted. When these early ones have been mastered others will come; in fact, a vast field of study will open itself out to the performer, each twist and turn of the "chapeau" suggesting another subject.

It is the most entrancing pursuit imaginable, adding to its charms simplicity and lack of troublesome and cumbrous paraphernalia. For will not the whole "plant," to use a colloquial term, fit itself neatly into an ordinary music case? The hat, being of a soft, pliable felt, can easily be twisted and manipulated, so as to take any form or shape

Napoleon.

To make the Napoleon hat, take hold of the outer edge of the felt and draw it through the centre opening as far as it will go. Place the hat upon the head with the inner edge of the drawn through part across the forehead, and then bend up the back of felt until it stands up at the back of the drawn through part.

The "chapeau" is made of felt, the diameter of the outer edge being about 17 inches, of the hole in the centre 6½.

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desirable—a nun's hood, or the stiff cocked hat of the portly beadle, a sombrero, and dustman's hat. The cloak will give little or no trouble. Of a dark colour and loose fit, it will readily adapt itself to the various studies, now resembling the workmen's frock, now the toreador's cloak, or again a military cape.

But the success of chapeaugraphic entertainments lies not only in the correctness of the portrait, but, in a very great measure, in the smartness with which each character is dealt with. Now, when the amateur has got the expression of the character to her satisfaction, she should practise both making the "hat" and the "face" as quickly as possible. Practise in this manner until quite half-a-dozen subjects have been mastered.

A wide-brimmed sombrero from the prairies out West.

It is only natural that an amateur will, at a first trial, be nervous, and as nervousness is always disastrous to entertainments of any kind, it is just as well to postpone the *début* until proficiency is assured, and nervousness banished by repeated rehearsals, with one's own family for audience. Then, when all the subjects chosen have been perfectly learnt, an essay before friends may be attempted.

"Look out, you naughty little boys, the Beadle is coming!"

In introducing the entertainment it is a good plan to hand round the chapeau for general inspection "to show there is no deception," and then explain that you will endeavour with the aid of this simple little piece of felt and the assistance of your own features, to give the audience a few impersonations of people and characters they are familiar with.

"A jovial monk am I," laughs this jolly French priest.

Next give the title of your first subject, turn round, manipulating the felt to the required shape as you do so, pull the correct facial expression and adjust your headgear, turning sharply round again to face the audience, and striking an attitude emblematic of the character impersonated. Stand perfectly rigid in this attitude, without altering the features in the slightest degree for at least twelve seconds, then suddenly let the assumed expression and attitude vanish, pull off the chapeau, and commence the next impersonation, proceeding as quickly as before.

With a twist of the felt we have a toreador.

This nun hardly approves of the ribald laughter of her colleague above.

It must be remembered that a quick, sharp entertainment is twice as effective and commands twice as much respect as a slow, dragged-out one.

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By

Ralph Harold Bretherton.

I was busy, but the children demanded an audience.

"Well," I said, "I suppose our relationship gives you a right to disturb me. Come in and tell me what you want."

Bene, though the younger of the twain, was the leader of the deputation. From that I learnt that it was not a serious matter that was about to be laid before me. Bene takes after me, and is philosophical. Gerry takes after his mother and worries over things. If Gerry had led this deputation, ten to one I should have been called upon to set a trouble right; but, as Bene was the leader, I suspected that I was to be dragged into some happy-go-lucky scheme. I put on an official air, and received the deputation with courtesy.

The deputation scarcely understood the etiquette that exists between humble petitioners and higher powers. One half sat on one side of my desk, and the other half on the other end. I drew some crumpled papers from under Gerry, and moved the inkpot away from Bene. "You don't want to spoil your pretty frock, do you, Bene?" I asked.

She drew her little skirts daintily about her, and looked at the surface of the desk. "No," she said. "But it's all quite clean."

"Well," I asked, "what do you want?"

"We want to give muvvie a Kissmuss present," Bene said.

"That's very kind of you."

"And we want it to be a s'prise," Gerry added.

"I suppose you're afraid of being hugged to death," I said.

"No, but it'll be so nice for muvvie not to know who it comes from," Bene said.

"How do you propose to give it to her, then?"

Bene had laid her plans, and she unfolded them.

"We're going to play Father Kissmuss."

"But Father Christmas won't like that at all."

"There isn't any Father Kissmuss," Gerry said.

"My dear children, you don't know what you're talking about. Who do you imagine fills your stockings—or rather, would fill your stockings if the things he brought were not too large to go into them—every Christmas eve?"

"You and muvvie," Bene said.

"I deny it most emphatically."

"But we've seen you."

"Well, you know, Father Christmas always takes the form or forms of the parents of the children he visits."

"We've thought it over," Gerry said, "and

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we don't believe there is any Father Kissmus."

"You little irreligious heretics! For goodness sake don't tell mother you don't believe in Father Christmas. She believes in him, and you're very naughty not to follow her example."

"I'm glad muvvie believes," Bene said, "'cause she'll think the present came from him, and not from us."

"Then you are going to put something in your mother's stocking?"

"Yes."

"But I'm not sure that she hangs a stocking up."

"You must make her."

"Have you thought of anything?" I asked.

Bene had thought of a ring and Gerry of a watch.

"You mustn't ruin yourselves, children," I said.

"Oh, no," Bene answered. "If we haven't got enough, you'll let us have some more, won't you?"

I elicited that the children were possessed of five shillings and sixpence.

"A ring," Bene said, "might cost a little more, mightn't it?"

"A watch might be more 'spensive than five and six," Gerry supposed.

"It's quite possible," I said. "But which shall it be, a watch or a ring?"

We decided on a ring.

"Shall it have diamonds, rubies, pearls, or what?" I asked.

"Oh, dymons, big, luvvy, sparkling dymons," Bene said. "And you'll get it for us, won't you, father? You'll know what to get better than us."

"And we want to give you a present," Gerry added. "You can get it when you get muvvie's."

"Thanks. Are you going to play Father Christmas to me?"

"No, 'cos you don't believe in him," Bene said.

"Well, what are you going to give me?"

"Anything you like," Bene said generously.

"Do you know those boxes of real, live, clay bricks—dear little red bricks? I'm just longing for one of those boxes—one of the biggest of those boxes, containing I don't know how many bricks. Will you give me one? May I get one?"

The children assented, and I tried to appear thoughtful. I scratched my head and puckered my brows.

"It has occurred to me, kiddies," I said, "that it would be rather awkward if muvvie knew that you'd given me the bricks. You see, she'll think you've given me a present, and haven't given her one, because she'll think her present came from Father Christmas. Do you mind if I put your present to me in your stocking—metaphorically speaking, of

I was busy, but the children demanded an audience.

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course, because it won't go in? It'll be the best way, I think."

The children demurred, and then agreed.

"You won't tell muvvie we're going to give her a ring?" Bene said.

"But why not give it to her straight out?" I asked.

"Oh," said Gerry, "we don't want her to know where it comes from."

The mystery was the thing; the children revelled in it; and I made solemn promises to keep their secret.

"We'll be ever so angry if you don't," Bene threatened.

"The audience is at an end," I said. "The deputation will retire."

The deputation retired as informally as it had come. It took away with it the usual promises and assurances which officials in high places give, and, in addition, some kisses which, perhaps, were unnecessary.

In the next few day I bought the bricks and the ring. I forgot to ask the children for their five and sixpence, and they forgot to give it to me; but that was a matter of little importance. I showed the ring to the children, and they were delighted with it. I felt sure that Beatrice would be delighted, too; she is very fond of jewellery.

Beatrice asked the children what they would like for Christmas, so that she might tell Father Christmas. They detailed their wants, and she told them to wish, and they would get everything. Beatrice, you see, still believed that Father Christmas was real—to her children. And, whether the children believed in Father Christmas or not, they knew that whoever personified him would be infallible.

I hung up Beatrice's stocking myself, when we went to bed after filling the children's stockings.

"Why on earth do you do that?" Beatrice asked.

"Oh! just for fun," I said.

"You silly old goose!" she cried, but she was too sleepy and happy to trouble to take it down.

Beatrice was soon asleep, but I lay awake, waiting to hear the children come. They came towards midnight, and I snored loudly to reassure them. They crept in with a rustle of unaccustomed stealth, and listened at the foot of the bed.

"They're boff 'sleep," Bene whispered to Gerry.

They knew where to find the stocking in the dark, for they had arranged with me where to put it. They fumbled the box containing the ring down to the bottom of the stocking, which was tied to the foot of the bed. The children tugged so at the stocking that the bed shook a little, but Beatrice did not wake up, and my snoring increased.

"I want to kiss muvvie," Bene said.

"No," Gerry said sternly.

They crept back to the door.

Beatrice slept, and I snored, and the children pattered back to the nursery.

Beatrice woke early, and, rousing me, got out and struck a light.

"Oh! there's that silly old stocking," she cried, looking at the foot of the bed.

I smiled under closed eyes, and Beatrice snatched the stocking down.

"Oh!" she said wonderingly, "there's something in it."

Half a minute passed in silence, and then a darkness fell across my face. Beatrice was kissing me rapturously.

"You darling boy," she cried.

I sat up.

"What does all this affection mean?" I asked.

Beatrice held up the ring.

"I know why you hung up the stocking," she said. "You wanted to give me this ring."

"What ring?"

"This ring, of course." She displayed the ring upon her finger. I knew by the light in her eyes that the children had made their mother a present which pleased her greatly. "It is good of you to give me such a ducky ring."

I was bewildered. I had not expected to be thanked for the children's present to Beatrice.

"Father Christmas gave you that ring," I said, "not I."

"Nonsense! He doesn't put rings in stockings. He can't have done it."

"It's not impossible, I assure you. He's put a Noah's Ark in before now."

Beatrice kissed me again, and said that I was the best husband in the world; her gratitude made me uncomfortable. I was tempted to break my promise to the children, but I decided to wait until I had consulted with them. I had no chance, however, before breakfast, of private conversation with them. Beatrice rushed off to wish the children "A Merry Christmas" directly she was dressed.

"Oh, do come and look at the lovely things the darlings have got," she called to me.

Of course neither Beatrice nor I had seen the things before. We looked upon them for the first time, and expressed amaze at their

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magnificence. The bricks puzzled Beatrice. She wondered how they came to be among the presents. She looked at me inquiringly, but said nothing.

Beatrice wore the ring at breakfast. She held out her hand over the teapot.

"Look, children, at the lovely ring father has given me," she cried.

"Father Christmas has given you," I corrected.

The children lifted up from their porridge two startled faces. They had not foreseen that I should be thought the donor of the ring, and they were taken aback. The delightful mystery they had planned was not working quite as they had expected. Tears blinked in Bene's eyes, and the corners of Gerry's mouth turned down. But the little hypocrites still pretended to know nothing of the present.

"Oh, muvvie, it is nice," Bene said.

"Aw'fy nice," Gerry added.

"Wasn't father good to give it to me?" Beatrice said.

The children murmured that I was very good.

"Kiss him for being so good to mother," said Beatrice.

The children did as they were bid. As they kissed me, I whispered to them: "Hadn't I better tell mother that it is your present?"

"No," said Bene resolutely, "not just yet."

"We want to keep the secret a bit longer," Gerry said,

It was foolish of them, but I suppose they still hugged the mystery dearly to them, though, for the life of me, I could not see what good it did them.

"It's very nice to receive all these kisses," I said, "but you have no reason, Beatrice, for supposing that the ring came from me."

"But I know it does," Beatrice said.

"Did you find it in your stocking?" Bene asked.

"Yes."

"Then it was Father Kissmuss."

"But he wouldn't come to me."

"Don't you believe in him, muvvie?"

"Of course I do," Beatrice said hurriedly.

"It may have been him," Bene persisted. I could see that it did not please her that I was mistaken for the donor, although she was not, as yet, ready to confess herself, with Gerry, the author of the gift. She saw what gratitude went out from Beatrice to me, and regretted that she had made the present in such a way that she missed that gratitude.

It is pleasant to dream of making a present in secrecy, but disappointing to see some unworthy person thanked as the kind giver. Bene was hurt. She knew now that the most pleasant part of generosity was the thanks that one received. She was not one of those haughty persons who scornfully wave away thanks. Besides which, the whole world fought for Beatrice's gratitude, always so genuinely given. Bene knew that a share of it was due to her, and, when she saw that share going to me, she was sorry that she had forsworn it, and she wished to divert it from me to some impersonal being, such as Father Christmas, who might be (and, indeed, had been, on this occasion) herself. So Bene was sad and silent, and Gerald took an interest in distant things which he mournfully observed beyond the breakfast table.

The children, lest their gloom should be observed, affected gaiety. Bene hummed, and Gerry ate ravenously and talked rapidly at the same time.

"I'm ever so happy," he declared, but he still gazed mournfully at distant things. Bene's humming stopped abruptly, and she looked at her plate.

"Have some more porridge?" Beatrice asked.

Bene shook her head. "I will," Gerry said in a shaky voice, and he held out his plate.

Beatrice could talk only of the ring. It was far better, she declared, than any ring she had ever had, and she hoped I had not ruined myself to get it. She continued to thank me, and I grew very uncomfortable. At the end of breakfast she came round and kissed me. She leaned over my shoulders, and, with her arm round my neck, rocked me to and fro in my chair.

"You're a dear old thing," she said.

A spasm passed through Bene's little frame. She looked at us through quivering eyelids, and the horror on her face would have been laughable, had it not been so real. It was impossible to bear stoically, even to keep up a mystery, or to help on a "s'prise," the sight of Beatrice hugging me for favours of which, unhappily, I was not the giver, and for which all thanks were due to Bene and her brother; and the child, realising how much she had lost, laid her head on the tablecloth and howled; Gerry was somewhat braver.

"Oh, don't cry yet, Bene," he said.

Beatrice left me, and went to comfort Bene. She carried her to the big chair by the fire, and there petted and soothed her.

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She carried her to the big chair by the fire, and there petted and soothed her.

"You mustn't cry on Christmas morning," Beatrice said.

"I can't help it," Bene sobbed.

"But what makes you cry?"

"The ring."

"The ring! Why, don't you like it?"

"Father didn't give it to you."

"What do you mean?"

"It was me and Gerry—and—and—you've been—be-en kissing father."

"Yes; me and Bene," Gerry said, and he suddenly took a very affectionate interest in his sister, with the result that he insinuated himself with her into the maternal embrace which was primarily to soothe Bene's tears.

I explained everything to Beatrice.

"What dear little stupids you are!" she cried, when she heard the story. "Why didn't you give me the ring in some other way? What made you put it in my stocking?"

"We wanted it to be a s'prise," Gerry said.

"You got the s'prise, kiddies," I remarked, "when you found me getting all the kisses."

"Yes," said Bene; but she was happy now, and her tears were gone.

"You might have told me, Hal," said Beatrice reproachfully.

"I longed to, but I had promised the children to keep it secret."

Beatrice remembered how she had thanked and kissed me.

"You were well paid for your trouble," she said.

"Yes," I answered, "but it hurt my tender conscience to receive the thanks which, by rights, should have gone to the children. If you had looked, you would have seen me writhing under unjust suspicion."

We all laughed, and then Beatrice's face clouded.

"But haven't you given father anything, children?" she asked.

"Yes," I said, "the bricks."

"But I thought——" Beatrice began.

"Shut up," I said.

"But——," she began again. I clapped my hand over her mouth.

"I'll tell you all about it later," I whispered, "but do be quiet now."

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LOVE IS KING

I.

What does the blackbird sing so clear?
Why does the primrose smile?
What is the tale told in the ear
Of the maid by the stile?
Why does she blush, why does she pale?
Trying her face to shade,
Love is the song and love the tale
Told to the flow'r and maid.

II.

What makes the sky seem dull and grey?
Why does the ocean moan?
Why does the maiden wend her way
Sorrowing all alone?
Why does she sigh, why are the tears
Streaming from her blue eyes?
Love is the cause of grief and fears
That in her heart arise.

III.

Why does the sun shine warm and bright?
Why do the church bells ring?
Why is the maiden robed in white?
What do the children sing?
Why do they shout? Why do they cast
Flowers before her feet?
It is because the storm is past—
Love is the King they greet.

G. D. Lynch.

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KISSES AND KISSERS

A little talk about the most popular art in the world, the art of kissing.

By Simon Gregory.

This is a very large subject, and should be treated exhaustively, in a dozen large folio volumes at least. It should be treated historically, practically, as an art, and as a science. However, here, where I am only allowed a few pages to expatiate on a subject covering such a vast field, all these various ways must be, so to speak, boiled down into a very short space.

The historical heading can be dismissed at once. Of the origin of kissing we know little and, as it is essentially an up-to-date science, we care less. It is really interesting to note that kissing seems to stay. It does not grow out of fashion like other things, but is always new, always fresh, always, we are informed by the British Museum authorities, delightful.

Of course, the most important kiss is the "Kiss of Love"—so important that it must be treated very seriously indeed. So do not let me see you laughing behind your fan, my dear young lady of barely eighteen summers. I am, I admit, a fusty old bachelor, but I have consulted all sorts of great authorities, from the Domesday Book to the *Times'* leader page, and, really, I think I know something about it by now. So listen carefully, brown-haired Miss. I am weighty and serious.

The first kiss of love is delightful and unique. The lady is perhaps coy. She looks down, your arm is round her waist, you only want one, just one—won't she be nice and kind? A moment of suspense and— Well, you take your one kiss. After that first kiss it is plain sailing. The experiment is tried and repeated several times. The pleasure never wears away, even when you and the young lady of your choice are married, when you both have grown grey, and you yourself are bald in patches and ugly. A lady is never ugly and never old.

Sometimes your wife will come and sit on the arm of your chair when you are reading your morning paper, smoking your matutinal cigarette. This affection is very curious indeed. You wonder why. Your wife kisses you and—what can she be up to? Does she want you to take her to a classical concert? Surely not! Or a theatre? Anyhow, it's time you were off. For the first time in your life you bless your morning train. There is one more big kiss, and you escape.

But at what a cost? The worst of it is, your wife will expect you to take her to church next Sunday morning to show off the lovely new hat.

Take care of such kisses. They are the kisses of Delilah.

But besides the above mentioned kisses there are others, in their way equally important.

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There is the kiss of the father for his daughter—parental in the extreme, administered usually on the forehead, bearing with it a world of advice and good counsel, with a dash of genial blessing thrown in.

There is a certain heartiness in the way a brother kisses his sister, an honesty in it which cannot be hidden. It is not effusive and cannot be called affectionate, but it really means a good deal. In most cases it is not often exhibited, perhaps because a boy is always afraid of, what he calls, "making an ass of himself" before strangers.

A goodbye kiss.

The kiss of an average sister for an average brother is, on the contrary, quite different. There is always a certain amount of admiration for a brother in the sister's heart, which is seldom concealed. A brother's opinion on general subjects is usually looked upon with respect. At any rate, this is the case with all properly-minded sisters, as the sister's opinion on her brother's lady friends is not without its value in the brother's mind.

A perfect kiss.

A sister does not seem to be ashamed of having a brother and loving him. I have known brothers who will present their heads to their sisters to be kissed, just as a monarch might graciously extend his hand to a courtier. The curious part is that the sister always acceeds to the brother's request—or rather command—and kisses him quite tenderly, which shows that she knows her duty, and has been properly brought up!

Very tempting!

Apart from a court ceremonial, hand kissing is one of the arts of the age of courtesy now passed. To kiss a lady's hand now is considered pedantic and sentimental. But should you

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ever be tempted to revive this very courteous mode of greeting, this is how it should be performed:

The lady's hand must not be raised to the lips; it must be held, not firmly, but lightly. In fact, the lady's hand must only rest on that of the man, while he bends over it, touching it lightly with his lips. However, to be done gracefully and with effect, a costume of the cavalier, or, at any rate, of the early Victorian period is necessary.

The parental kiss has a touch of blessing about it.

What does she want? A gown or a new hat?

It is really most amusing to see the effusive and affectionate kiss between two ladies. They rush into each other's arms and call each other "dear girls," and all sorts of nice things, to show how well they love each other; and yet, as likely as not, each will say all sorts of nasty things about the other behind their backs. To the male mind this is somewhat perplexing. No doubt if one were to argue out the thing with a lady friend, she would prove, quite indisputably and to her own satisfaction, that these strange vagaries were quite as they should be, and if you ventured a mild criticism, would say "Oh! it is all so obvious." Ladies are, as some one once said, "rum beggars."

The old maiden aunt always kisses her nieces and nephews when she meets them. It is not exactly a pleasant experience to go through; there is little warmth in the kiss; in fact it more resembles a peck than anything else. But no doubt the dear maiden aunt enjoys it a good deal more than you do, so there is no more to be said.

The brother accepts the sister's kiss, but is not very enthusiastic about it.

Kissing in public is always excessively awkward,

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Kissing of hands is ceremonial or a sign of very great devotion.

Look how affectionate these two sweet creatures are. I wonder what they will say about each other afterwards.

for a man at any rate. I remember, in my green and callow youth, before I had numbered seventeen summers, being kissed publicly, before a whole drawing-room full of people, by an American lady about to leave England to cross to New York.

My horror may be imagined, especially when some heartless person in the room accused me of blushing. Needless to say, this accusation being unrefutable, I fled precipitously.

Children, too, are sometimes told to "kiss and make friends"—a performance which invariably goes against the grain. It is quite delightful to see them carefully wiping the kisses away on their sleeves or pinafores. They never have handkerchiefs, by the way.

I was a child once, and a very autocratic one. Hence, imagine my disgust when one day I was told that my little girl cousin was to ride in my particular and private perambulator. The "pram." was a big three-wheeled affair with room for two. But I was what may be called a "Mellin's food baby," and so filled up most of it. Added to the above insult, the nurse said to me, "Now, Simon, kiss cousin Sylvia." The police talked about causing an obstruction in the public streets after that.

Google

By Clara Morris.

You must have often heard the expression: "He looks as though he had just come out of a band-box." Well, when Banty arrived at his present home, he literally stepped out of a band-box, in which he had travelled from Manchester, in company with Antoinette and Susan, his two charming wives. When the box was brought into the house it had tied over its top for a cover a piece of wire netting, and just as the mistress pulled it off the gardener cried:

"Take care, mum—they'll dash out and be breaking everything!"

But the little fellow said quickly: "Keep still, my dears, there's nothing to be afraid of! That fellow must take us for a lot of wild rabbits — confound him!" while all the time the mistress was crying: "Oh, you lovely things! Oh! isn't he a little gem?" and she softly laid her fingers on his head, and stroked him, at which he drew a thin white film across his bright garnet eyes, lifted up his feathers after the fashion of a parrot, and said: "K—r—kret!"

And everyone laughed aloud, for though he spoke in his own language, even the men and women understood that he wanted the mistress to go on rubbing his head and stroking his feathers, which she smilingly did, until Antoinette's jealousy showed itself in a sharp peck at the mistress's hand.

And then the gardener lifted the box, and carried the entire family down to that portion of the chicken-house yard that had been wired off especially for their use, and put the box down and withdrew.

The quality that was to make Banty popular in the neighbourhood—a self-sacrificing devotion to his wives, as lasting as it was delicate—showed itself the very next day after his arrival. Whenever, during the routine of domestic duties, one of the ladies found it was time to deposit a pretty, toy-like egg in one of the nests, she assumed a nonchalant, even an absent-minded expression, and, under cover of this indifference, separated herself from the rest of the family and discreetly retired to the privacy of the nest.

Now, other cocks at such times are apt to be found bandying compliments with pert young hens, or foraging selfishly for themselves, or picking fights. But not so Banty. When he missed his tiny wife he smiled knowingly, scratched up a few worms or slugs, and, under cover of No. 2's enjoyment of them, he slipped after No. 1, and with a friendly "K-r—kret!" cuddled his handsome little body as close to her as he could possibly get, where, as egg-laying seems to be a somnolent occupation, they dozed and nodded socially together, until the sudden opening of her clear red eyes and a choking "cluck-cluck!" in her throat told him the séance was over, when, in a perfect whirlpool of triumphant joy, they issued forth, and cackling and strutting they made the circuit of their inclosure.

It seems strange that the pleasure of laying an egg never palls. An experienced old hen will, at her thousandth egg, show the same hilarious joy that the sight of her first egg

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produced in her. But, then, a perfectly shaped white or ivory-tinted egg is a very beautiful thing, especially when you find it in a sweet-scented nest of hay, instead of the wooden box of the grocer, and it is a wonderful and valuable thing, perhaps; and, after all, the hen is to be excused for showing that she knows a good thing when she sees it.

Now the peculiar conduct of Banty was very soon noticed by the men on the farm, and they would leave their work to go and stare mockingly at his delicate attention to his wives, and by-and-by it was spoken of in the neighbourhood, and ladies came sometimes to peep into the house and see for themselves the tiny little white cock, sitting close to the nest side, keeping his wife company during the egg-séance, and they bubbled over with delight and admiration; nor can it be doubted that Banty enjoyed their praise, for he was a little *beau* to the ends of his small spurs.

In another way, too, he differed from most cocks. The immense Plymouth-Rock cock known as "Plym," would, for instance, solemnly dig up some fat slug or grub, and would call loudly, "Chook chook!" and his string of wives would come rushing, all out of breath, eager to enjoy their expected treat, and when they had all had a good look at it, he would say, "Now just see me eat it!" and down he would gobble it himself and then strut about thinking himself a magnificent creature.

But the gallant little bantam would set his strong little claws to work and tear the earth up like a tiny plough, and when *he* turned up some delicate morsels, he would "chook-chook!" and the little ladies would come running, whereupon Banty would draw back and watch them while they ate delightedly these fruits of his toil—but Banty was then, as he is now, a gentleman!

They lived very happily. Antoinette, to be sure, had no diamonds for her gizzard, but crushed oyster-shell and some clean pebbles seemed to answer as substitutes. Big Plym was the one drawback to their peace of mind. He was a coarse fellow, and he used to put his big yellow eye to the meshes of the wire net, and stare at the ladies till they were quite upset, and Banty told him more than once that he'd give him a sound thrashing some day, if they both lived long enough; and they did live long enough, and Banty kept his word, too!

Yet, right in the midst of their contentment, disaster came. Poor Susan! a cruel accident took her out of the world, the only comfort being that it was so swift a stroke that she had no time even to feel pain. After that Banty was never away from Antoinette's side. The men said he fed that laying hen as if she had been a cheeping little downy chick; and so, sweetly and lovingly, they were passing through life, when Antoinette began to droop, to sicken. All that the mistress could do was done. Medicine was given, artificial heat was applied, but nothing availed, Antoinette was dying, and Banty knew it!

Poor little man! She could not stand on her feeble legs, so he would not stand on his. He, from sitting behind her, finally squeezed himself into the nest with her, and there he stayed. He would not come away to feed, to exercise, or take a dust bath. He left his feathers undressed, unpreened. They began to look dull; his bright comb was fading, and then one day he "K-r-kretted" in vain. Poor Antoinette's little head lay sidewise toward him, but she was quite dead; and when they went to take her out of the nest to

He literally stepped out of a band-box.

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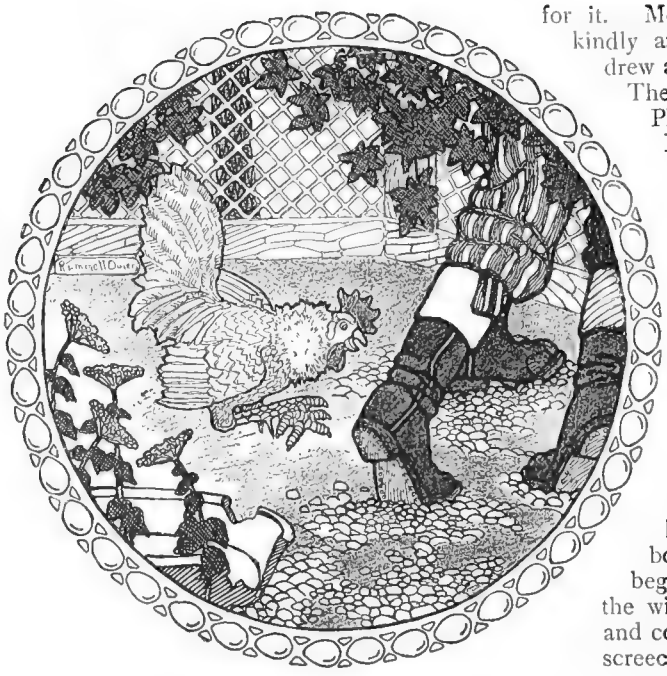

Banty fought like a small fiend and tried to spur the men's legs as they walke..

bury her by Susan, Banty, in a very fury of outraged grief, flew at the men's hands and fought like a small fiend, and followed them to the opening of the netting and tried to spur their legs as they walked.

With tearful eyes his mistress lifted him and stroked his head, but he was silent. No pleased "K—r—kret" answered her, and soon she saw there was but one small chance of saving the life of the grieving little creature—she resolved to turn him free and let him go with the other fowls.

"Oh, mum!" cried the gardener, "them big cocks will lick the life out of him!"

But the mistress put her head on one side and said thoughtfully: "Do you think so? well I don't!" and there suddenly came to her memory the chorus of a song an old woman used to sing at her work, and, to herself she repeated:

"Oh, put your *little* chicken
In the middle of the ring,
And *never* bet your money
On a Shanghai!"

and added, aloud: "I have faith to believe that little fellow is game; but even if another cock should be too much for him, he'd better far die fighting than die of grief!"

And so poor, lonely, drooping, little Banty received his liberty, when he no longer cared for it. Most of the fowls treated him kindly and spoke to him fairly, but he drew aside and walked sadly alone.

Then up stalked the immense Plym, and, looking down on Banty, made a coarse remark about his size; and Banty stopped, and looking Plym up and down, said:

"Oh, I believe you are the rascal who used to annoy the late ladies Bantam. I told you I'd thrash you. and——"

Oh, it was a beautiful fight! Big Plym did his best, but that little fiend was as quick as lightning—he was everywhere, except where Plym struck. He seemed to have turned himself into a bounding ball of feathers. Blood began to show on both of them; the wildest confusion reigned—hens and cocks cackling and crowing and screeching; and at last little Banty succeeded in what he had been trying for from the first—the strain of game blood in him making him fiercely indifferent to the punishment he received himself. He fought on, till at last he bounded on to Plym's back, and vindictively attacked his eyes, and his mistress had the satisfaction of seeing the men running to save big Plymouth-Rock Plym from her lion-hearted Bantam!

She took him into her lap, and as she sponged his bloody little face, he cheerfully remarked, "K-r-kret! k-r-r-kret!" and at those welcome words his mistress burst out singing:

"Oh, put your *little* chicken
In the middle of the ring,
And *never* bet your money
On a Shanghai!"

For that fight had done more to stimulate the small widower than had all the iron-loaded water, the peppered food, and the ale-soaked bread offered him in the past two weeks. It had increased the circulation of his blood, and had given him a distinct pleasure—for there are few pleasanter sensations than that of knocking spots out of a wretch who had insulted one held dear.

So the mistress felt greatly encouraged about Banty, and herself fed him with ale-soaked bread and minced meat, while she gave orders for the care of big Plym, who, standing principally on one foot, rumpled

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and discouraged, took with his one eye a very gloomy view of life, which was probably intensified by his knowledge that, just behind him, two half-grown young cocks were imitating the late scrap, to the hysterical delight of a group of Plymouth-Rock chickens, before whom he had been in the habit of posing as a very god of strength and beauty.

Banty was all right in a day or two, and in less than a fortnight he was established in the position which he fills to this day—a position requiring a watchful eye, quick decision, and plenty of nerve. In fact, he polices the chicken yard. Whenever there is a disturbance, Banty appears, stepping very, very high, and generally his passing between the belligerents two or three times is enough, and they walk off in different directions; but if things have gone too far for that, and the lie has been passed or spurs struck, he turns in and licks them both, and so keeps his own end up while preventing promiscuous quarrelling and rowdy fighting.

The thing that tries him most is having to stop a hen fight. Of course, one angry old hen can out-talk the finest cock that ever lived, and two of them talking at once—well, "that way madness lies!"

But it is here his fine breeding comes in. He will soothe them and smooth them, offering compliments to the oldest and ugliest, and to the youngest and happiest, his sympathy for the sadness of her life, and at last leaves them, still talking nineteen to the dozen, but not quarrelling—only joining in praising him.

One bright autumn day his mistress heard the low, pleased "Kr—r—r—kret!" of Banty, and she said to herself:

"Why, that sounds like old times, when he attended his egg-séances! I wonder where he is?"

She looked into the green-house, under the potting shelf—he was not in either place. Again she heard "K—r—r—kret! K—r—r—kret!" She entered the orchard, and there, under an upturned cart, sat the glistening white Banty, cuddled close to the lee side of the blackest and the biggest Spanish hen on the place. She loomed above him, a veritable hill of black feathers, and, while he addressed her in the tenderest tones, she looked down at him and gently pecked at two or three grass seeds that had fallen on his white shoulders, with just the coy air of possession with which a young wife will pick a bit of fluff from the coat sleeve of her husband.

And at that sight the mistress looked about for a good dry place on the grass, and sat down there and laughed until she cried. And when she had heard a wild cackling, and saw Banty stepping highly and joyously by his big wife's side, she went and looked under the cart, and there lay an immense milk-white egg.

It was probably her inky clothing—don't you think?—that first attracted the attention of the little widower.

Then he found her a simple, kindly, domestic creature, of excellent family, and—and—winter was coming on, and he could not recall his little ladies, so he made up his mind to make the best of things, and took to wife the big, black, gentle thing.

She has more slugs and worms provided for her than she ever saw in her whole life before, and they perch in the little corner that has been a home for them so long; and he polices all day, when not at the egg-séance, and rises at twelve and three o'clock to crow; and he remains still, in his mistress's eye, a very gallant little bantam.

Banty polices the chicken yard.

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CROWNS AND ROBES TO ORDER.

The Peers' coronets are made of silver gilt mounted on ermine. The cap is of velvet. They cost about £20. A Duke's coronet has eight strawberry leaves and no beads

A Marquis's coronet has four leaves and four silver beads.

An interesting article describing how the robes to be worn at the Coronation by our Peers are made.

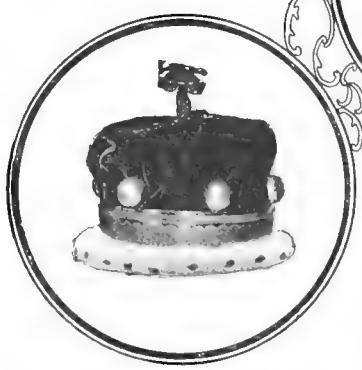
BY A. WALLIS MYERS.

Illustrated with Photographs.

An Earl is allowed eight leaves and eight beads.

MAN is only human after all, and therefore it is not very surprising to learn that very soon after Queen Victoria died, several nobles visited their robe-makers and discussed prospective dresses for a coronation. Happily,

The Viscount's coronet has sixteen beads.



The Baron is permitted only six silver beads.

sixty-three years had passed since the necessity for acquiring a suitable attire in which to attend the crowning of a sovereign had arisen; but the lapse of time had its disadvantages.

Lavender and camphor will not preserve a crimson velvet mantle for ever, though it be encased in a tin box placed on the shelf of a strong room. Nor can ancestors be expected in all cases not to require that their robe and coronet shall be buried with them. Both of these considerations have naturally tended to increase the demands for brand new apparel for the Coronation of King Edward VII. Further, it must be borne in mind that many

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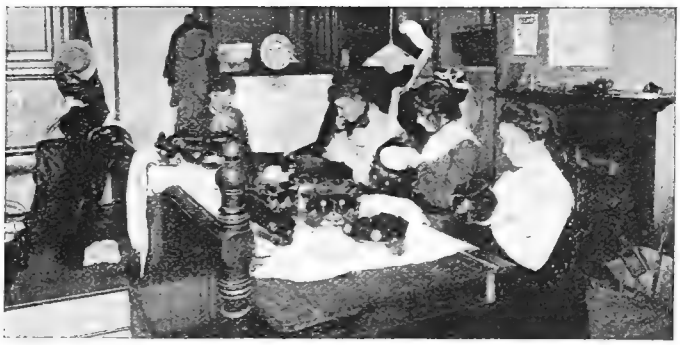


The caps for the coronets are made of velvet and ermine

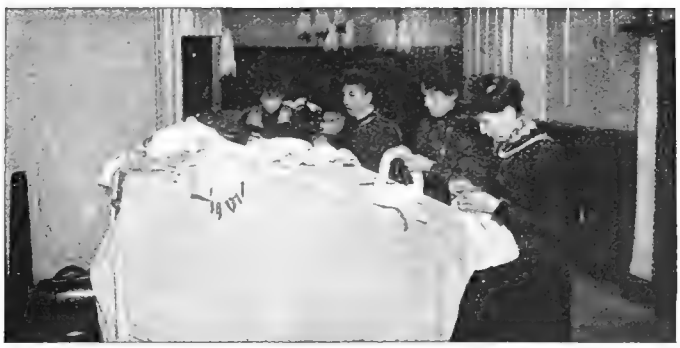
of the present day peers cannot boast ancestors who ever left coronation robes behind them—they date their creation after the auspicious event which marked the year 1838.

Probably both peer and robe-maker are grateful to the Earl Marshal for giving them "cut and dried" instructions relative to the style and material of the coronation attire. It became only necessary for the peer to step in at the front door of the robe-maker and be measured; and for the latter to visit Norfolk House, where models are on view, and with great precision and care obtain a paper pattern of the same, in addition to taking home copious notes with regard to such essential *minutiæ* as differentiate a duke's apparel from that of a baron.

In any quest after historical information it is lucky to secure the ear of a man whose memory carries him, so to speak, as far back as the reign of Queen Anne; whose ancestors in fact actually made the coronation robes for that monarch, and who have since held the Royal robe-maker's warrant right up to the present time.

In one of Messrs. Ede & Son's safes in their Chancery Lane establishment is a crumbling old ledger, moth-eaten, but with writing still perfectly legible, containing the identical entry chronicling George III.'s own coronation robes. It is too long (and mis-spelt) to reproduce in entirety here, but the entry, dated September 14, 1761, concludes with the satisfactory notification that the bill was "payed in full" six weeks after the goods had been delivered.

But it was the coronation of the fourth



Each circlet of ermine is adorned with little black spots, made from the tails of foxes.

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The Peers' robes are of English-made velvet only, by order of Queen Alexandra.

For a Duke's cape of minever four rows of fox skin spots are ordered.

George that brought *kudos* to Messrs. Ede's. The pageant was magnificently dressed—indeed, the King had set his mind on creating a stir throughout Europe. His own gorgeous robe of crimson velvet and ermine, which is now at Madame Tussaud's, cost £2000 alone, and all the officers of State, peers and peeresses and knights of the various orders were equipped magnificently, the Duke of Wellington, as Lord High Constable of England, perhaps eclipsing all.

By comparison, the Coronations of William IV. and Queen Victoria were far less pretentious, the most noticeable change in regard to the peers' costumes being the substitution of uniform or Court dress beneath the crimson robe for the trunk hose and doublet of slashed satin. The late Queen's Coronation, as contrasted with that of her magnificent uncle, cost the country the mere trifle of £300,000. It remains to be seen what that of his great-nephew will involve, but it is tolerably certain that His Majesty will do nothing by "halves."

By the official decree of the Earl Marshal the peer's robe or mantle for use in Westminster Abbey must consist of crimson velvet, edged with minever fur; the cape must be furred with pure minever, and powdered with bars or rows of fox's fur, according to the degree of the wearer—thus a Baron has two rows, a Viscount two and a half, an Earl three, a Marquis three and a half and a Duke four rows.

Their coronets must be of silver gilt; the caps of crimson velvet, edged with ermine and with a gold tassel on the top; no pearls or precious stones may be set in the circlet, but according to the rank of the wearer, it is adorned with small silver balls with or without the accompaniment of strawberry leaves. With regard to the coronets, by the way, exactly the same rule of design applies to those worn by the peeresses, though these are of course much smaller and are worn at the back of the head behind a tiara.

It was gratifying, in view of Queen Alexandra's express desire, to find that the men employed in the cutting room at Messrs. Ede's were mostly bringing their scissors and tape to ply upon English velvet, needless to say of the richest kind. As a peer of good

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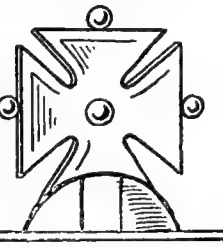
stature requires a robe nearly three yards long and the smallest one of two, it follows that the piece of crimson velvet which is sent down to the tailors to hem and border is of goodly size; indeed, one could easily be spread over the crossed legs of the busy circle of tailors, like an undulated table-cloth.

In another room at Messrs. Ede's a crowd of girls were at work on the ermine bases of the coronets and on the crimson velvet caps which cover them. Each ermine circle is adorned with the same number of little black spots made from the tails of foxes—by official decree the black tails of the ermine must not be used for this purpose, nor for adorning the minever capes.



Three and a half rows of spots is the number allowed to the Marquis.

The Earl may adorn his cape with three rows of spots.

The Viscount is allowed two and a half rows.

A Baron's cloak. Only two rows of spots are permitted.

Upon visiting the furrier's department below, where bales of spotless ermine skins, fresh from the Siberian trappers, were stocked in a great white heap, the enormous extra trade done in ermine and the cost it involved became immediately evident. Though the indispensable stoat which supplies the peerage with its coronation capes is found in the northern parts of both hemispheres and may be discovered in Scotland, its chief resort is Siberia, which produces examples of ermine of widely divergent sizes and characteristics.

In England the stoat is brown on the back and white underneath, and rarely assumes its winter coat; but in Siberia, as in Scotland, it invariably changes in winter to a pure white, with the exception of the tip of the tail which is always black. The breed most in demand at the present day hails from the province of Irschim, where the ermine stoats are larger and whiter, producing richer fur than those to be found, perhaps, in any other district. The animals, easily caught in long box traps, are almost immediately skinned by the trappers

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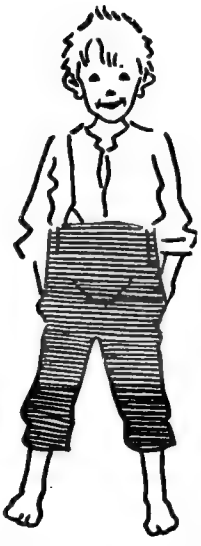

GEORGE.

By Erroll Stanhope.

"'O ses so?"

"I does."

"Yus, no doubt, but wot I wants ter know is, 'ow can we tell you're speaking the truth?"

"I dunno, don't care neither — I've been and seen 'em and done it."

"'Ow did yer git?"

"The young gent, 'im with the sandy 'air, give so much money and a 'undred of us went."

"Why weren't I took then——"

"Yah!"

"I'll teach yer to say yah ter me, my fine kid—Take that, and that, and that. Naw then, 'op it. I'm agoin' inter the country too, an' when I comes 'ome, if you've bin tellin' lies———I'll burn yer, straight!"

The last speaker was a small and very ragged boy of about eleven years. He was very small, very ragged, and extremely dirty. His frayed knickerbockers looked suspiciously like a pair of men's trousers that had been cut off at the knees, as they were many sizes too big in the waist. His little legs were thin and guiltless of stockings or boots, and he was sitting on a stone wall by the river close to Charing Cross.

There were several other boys with him, and it was to one of these he had addressed the above conversation. They were obviously part of the Great Unwashed, members of a rising generation, homeless and uncared for—living how they could, sleeping where they could, and spending their lives in avoiding the policeman.

After the others had gone, George came off his stone and meditatively took his way to the Strand. He was turning over in his mind what he had heard. That somewhere close to London there was a wild river, not a tame one like the one that flowed under Waterloo Bridge, but a wild one, with fish in it, and Hyde Park on both sides. In these Hyde Parks were flowers, growing, and not tied in penny bunches, and sheep's heads alive and with their bodies on stood in them and ran, if you threw stones.

Could it be true, he wondered—no, assuredly not. *He'd* never seen such things, and the other boy must (from long practice) have been unable to speak the truth.

However, still turning the matter over, he arrived at a picture shop close to the National Gallery. In the centre window was a large oil painting. It represented a landscape with cattle grazing and a peaceful grey river winding through the meadows.

George stopped. Here was the realisation of the other boy's narrative.

He stood on one foot and rubbed the calf of his leg with the other for a long time, while he studied every line in the picture.

"Yus, I might 'a' guessed it. 'E's bin 'ere and seen this, an' then comes a-crowdin' it dawn our necks. That's it!"

A tall young lady in black had been watching the small boy for some time. When he passed this remark to himself she said—

"What's that?"

George looked up quickly from under the brim of his crownless hat and said nothing.

"What were you saying, little boy?" she asked again.

"Nuthin'," rather sulkily.

To George every stranger was an enemy.

"I thought I heard you say something about the picture."

The boy took another look at the girl's face. It was very pretty, and the brown eyes were kind.

So he burst out:

"Well, it is like this 'ere. Tom an' Harry Sykes an' Pete, wot's father's in quod, 'ev bin sayin' as 'ow they 'ev seen that picter, only real. Some cove took 'em ter see it, an' I don't believe 'em, thet's all."

"Have you never seen anything like it, then?"

"No; there ain't no sich places."

"Oh, yes, there are; plenty of them."

The quiet tone of the lady seemed to impress George. He opened his mouth and looked at her.

"Would you care to go?"

"Wot, O!" he replied.

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"Well, if I gave you the money and told you where to go, could you find the place?"

"Yus, laidy." At the mention of money George instinctively classed the stranger as a lady.

"Well, here you are. What is your name?"

"George."

"George what?"

"George nuthin'."

"Where's your mother?"

"Ain't got one."

"Or father?"

"Never 'ad neither."

"Dear me, and no home?"

"No 'm."

"Poor little child. Here is ninepence. Here is the place I have written on my card for you to take it to. Give the gentleman the money and then he'll do the rest."

"An' shell I see these 'ere things wot's painted? It ain't a do, is it?"

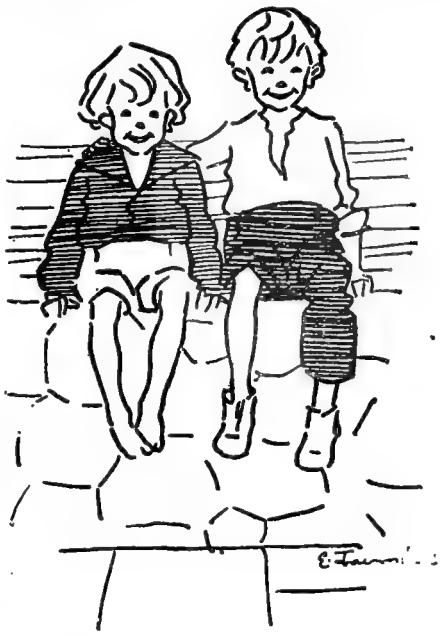
"No," she said smiling. "You'll see just what the other boys saw. Good-bye, George," and the lady walked away.

George stood for a moment and surveyed himself tentatively in a piece of plate glass that ran down the side of the shop window.

"W'o ses yer don't 'ob nob with dooks, my boy? I'm tellin' yer, there always *was* a bit o' class abaht yer, George. When ladies takes their 'ats off to yer, it's time, I don't think. An' they gives yer money too, and don't yer forgit it. Wot O! an' I never thanked 'er."

He said this last aloud. In the distance he saw his benefactress. In half a minute more he was beside her.

"Thank yer, laidy, for the money," he said. "Yer a real toff, an' if I ken do yer a good turn, s'w'elp me, I'll do it, straight!" and without waiting for any more he dashed across the road and made his way east to the address on the card.



Sitting on a stone wall by the river close to Charing Cross.

Mabel was the lady's name. At least, that was all he could read. The other name was too long and hard for him to decipher.

Anyway, her name was Mabel, and she had given him ninepence to go into the country with, and that was enough for George.

Some days later a small boy stood up to his knees in a meadow. The grass was long and feathery, and large white daisies and yellow flowery mustard grew round him.

Larks sang in the blue heavens above, and the cool, pure air fanned his face.

It was George, with his eyes and mouth wide open. Beyond his wildest dreams was the realisation of the lady's ninepence.

Here he was out in the real country, together with dozens of his fellow waifs and strays.

Here was food for meditation and occupation also. He had been in the country four hours, and had had five glorious fights already.

There was nothing left to desire in the world! He even confided to his friend—one of the toffs of the party, dressed in coat and trousers, but devoid of underclothing or boots, that "it was better than a dog fight any day."

His astonishment was unbounded when he found a rose bush covered with red flowers growing on it, and not wired. But when he espied ripe plums hanging to a branch on the top of a high wall, everything else faded from his mind. He had stolen away from the others, and the vigilant eyes of the gentleman who had brought him were off him at present.

Sticking his little bare toes in the crevices, he crawled like a cat up the wall.

Reaching the top he put his hand out to take the much coveted fruit.

Voices arrested his hand midway. He dared not move to take the plum, and he had not the strength of mind to leave it. He sat there, hidden in the foliage, and awaited events.

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He haunted the vicinity of the picture shop.

"Yes, it is sad. I call it rather absurd myself."

"Oh, I don't know. You see he is very proud, and nothing can be done."

"Couldn't some outsider help them?"

"I'm afraid not. You see, it is this way. Young George was in a bank. You know that. Well, when he asked Mabel to marry him, she, poor girl, had nothing, and he had only £150 a year."

"Well, how *could* a girl marry on that?"

"Some do."

"Oh, some do, of course. She wouldn't, anyhow. He went away and she never saw him again. But it is a strange thing. She never seemed the same girl after. They were very fond of each other, you know."

"Well, I can't understand her not risking it, if she loved the fellow."

"No, she said she did not feel capable of managing on £3 a week, and there it was. Besides, she was very young."

"Well, what has happened now?"

"That's the worst of it. About a year ago Mabel came into all that money, and there she is. Disappointed and rich. It is very sad."

"Why doesn't she marry him now?"

"Don't be so stupid. How can she? She is not a sort of girl to ask *any* man to marry her; and besides, now she is rich George could not ask her again because he, poor fellow, has lost his berth."

"You don't say so?"

"It's true. He met with an accident, and has been in St. Thomas's Hospital ever since. The McConnell's found him there. Poor boy, I wish we could help him. He is so fond of the girl, and she so fond of him, that it does seem a shame. Mrs. McConnell goes to see him, and although he never mentions Mabel, she knows the thought of losing his situation and her, is on his mind continually, and prevents him from getting well."

"It would naturally. What a pity something can't be done. And what does she do?"

"Oh, turned philanthropist like lots of people. Goes about slumming and raking up waifs and strays. You know Mr. Morton? Well, he says she is one of his biggest helpers, and if ever she comes across a child named George she *always* helps him. Hark! There is the gong; let us go in to tea."

The boy on the wall heard all this. Some of it he did not understand, but he comprehended enough to make sure they were speaking of the lady who had befriended him.

When the speakers had gone he took the plum and descended from the wall to rejoin his comrades, his mind fully made up to find Mabel and tell her what he had heard.

The question was—how?

He did not know her other name, and he did not know where she lived.

For several days he haunted the vicinity of the picture shop, and smoked endless fag ends of cigars, but the tall figure in black did not appear. At last he gave up hope.

Then Providence helped him.

Crossing the road one day a carriage came swiftly round the corner and almost knocked him down. Having reached the kerb he turned to look at the retreating equipage.

One lady sat in it, alone, and dressed in black. It was Mabel! With a shrill whistle he darted after the carriage. It took him some time to reach it, and then naturally no one took any notice of a small, ragged boy shouting behind a carriage.

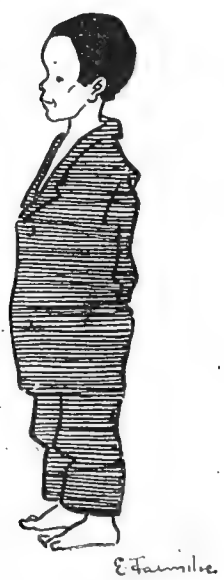
But the girl caught the sound of her name and turned. In another moment the horses were pulled up and the magnificent footman descended to open the door.

George, panting, came to the step.

The footman warned him off.

"W'o are yer shovin'? I've got somethin' to arst the laidy."

Mabel leant forward and recognised the child. "I'm George,



A chap 'oo's father's a plasterer.

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please, and I've got somethin' to say," he panted.

"Get in, George."

With an impertinent leer at the horrified manservant, George stepped gingerly into the carriage and sat at the extreme edge of the seat.

"What have you got to say?" asked the lady kindly.

He leant forward and whispered.

"Yer see, I've bin, and it's quite true. I 'aven't punched the boy's 'ead because it wasn't no lies, an' when I was there I 'eard as 'ow your George is very ill and wanting yer bad."

The young lady started back and the colour rushed to her face.

"Yus, it's like this. I said as 'ow I'd do yer a turn if I got the charnst, an', bli me, I'm adoin' it. If yer takes my advice you'll drive to the haccident part of St. Thomas's 'orspital, and say to him as is there with a haccident, as 'ow 'e needn't worry about gettin' work because your bit is enough fer both. 'E can't get well without yer 'cause I 'eard a cove wot said so, an' arter all, a bit of oof comes in 'andy sometimes. I knows a chap 'oo's father's a plasterer. Good trade, but there ain't always work 'andy, an' when 'e's out, she does a bit o' washin' like, an' it 'elps things a lot."

The lady smiled. "It is very interesting, but I can't see how your friend the plasterer has anything to do with me."

"Well, yer see, your George ain't in graft jus' now, and don't like to arst yer to 'ave 'im (I 'eard the saime cove say so), but I carn't see myself why yer shouldn't go an' arst 'im. You're mashed on 'im an' 'e's mashed on you, an' as you've got a bit yer wouldn't 'ave to do no charin' or washin' when 'e was slack—d'yer see?"

He spoke very earnestly, his little old-young face quite intent and watching her.

She had a smile on her face while he was speaking, and he thought he saw tears in her eyes once.

"And you advise me to go to George, then?" she said gently.

"Yus, thet's it. Jes' go to 'im an' say, I wants yer, an' yer wants me, an' it don't matter if yer ain't got a job, 'cos my bit's enough fer both! That's *my* advice."

For a moment the girl seemed pondering, and then she gave a sigh.

"All right, George, your idea isn't bad. Mind how you get down, and here is sixpence to buy a cake with. I wonder if Heaven had anything to do with my meeting you. Were you an angel in disguise?" George, not knowing how to answer, replied:

"Wot O! I don't think!"

But he heard the direction given to the coachman: "St. Thomas's Hospital, Accident Ward." And he turned a catherine wheel on the pavement as Mabel drove away, still with that sweet smile on her face.

Then he opened his hand to gloat on the sixpence she had given him.

It was a gold one!

THE MORAL OF IT.

THE FRESH AIR FUND is an organisation which exists to brighten, so far as may be, the dull, joyless lives of the children in the slums of our great cities.

The F.A.F. devotes the whole of the moneys subscribed to the purpose for which their donors intend them. There are no deductions for rent or salaries or postage, or the thousand and one expenses which make so big a hole in many other excellent charities. The whole of the expenses are paid by Messrs. C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., and by the Ragged School Union, which places its great organisation at the disposal of the Fund.

There is no charity in the case of which so little buys so much. Ninepence pays for a day's delight for a child. Eight pounds two shillings provides all that is necessary for the enjoyment of a complete party of 200 children, with the needful complement of attendants.

As a broad rule, threepence pays for a child's fare, and sixpence more buys it food enough for two good meals.

Every penny subscribed is spent on those two wonder-workers—food and fares. God's green country and the kindly help of willing friends do what else is needed to make a day's real happiness for a little prisoner of the great, gloomy city.

There are no distinctions of creed. Need and the improbability of any other holiday are the only qualifications.

Subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Sec. FRESH AIR FUND, 17 and 18, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and will be acknowledged in *Pearson's Weekly*.

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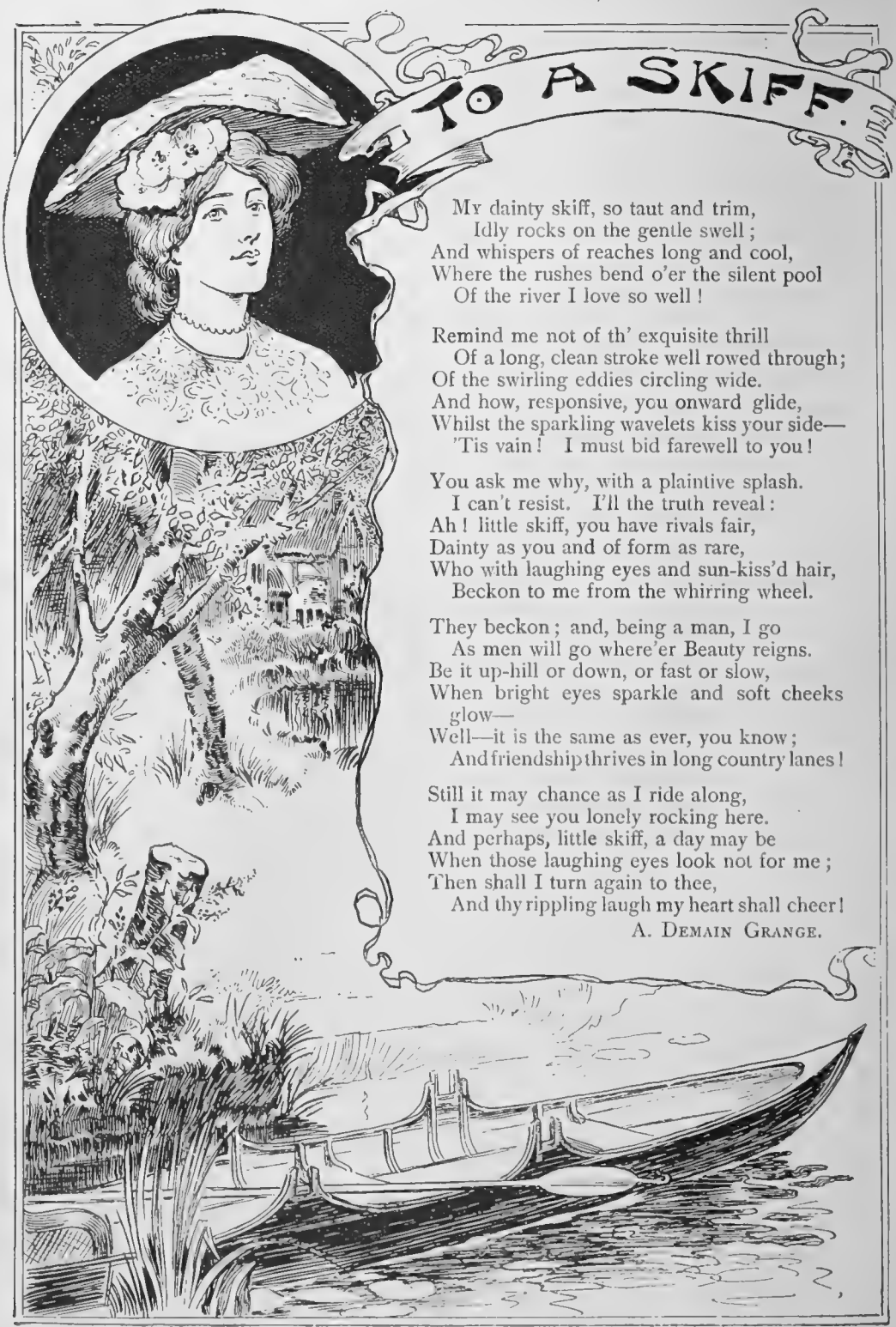

TO A SKIFF.

My dainty skiff, so taut and trim,
Idly rocks on the gentle swell;
And whispers of reaches long and cool,
Where the rushes bend o'er the silent pool
Of the river I love so well!

Remind me not of th' exquisite thrill
Of a long, clean stroke well rowed through;
Of the swirling eddies circling wide.
And how, responsive, you onward glide,
Whilst the sparkling wavelets kiss your side—
'Tis vain! I must bid farewell to you!

You ask me why, with a plaintive splash.
I can't resist. I'll the truth reveal:
Ah! little skiff, you have rivals fair,
Dainty as you and of form as rare,
Who with laughing eyes and sun-kiss'd hair,
Beckon to me from the whirring wheel.

They beckon; and, being a man, I go
As men will go where'er Beauty reigns.
Be it up-hill or down, or fast or slow,
When bright eyes sparkle and soft cheeks glow—
Well—it is the same as ever, you know;
And friendship thrives in long country lanes!

Still it may chance as I ride along,
I may see you lonely rocking here.
And perhaps, little skiff, a day may be
When those laughing eyes look not for me;
Then shall I turn again to thee,
And thy rippling laugh my heart shall cheer!

A. Demain Grange.

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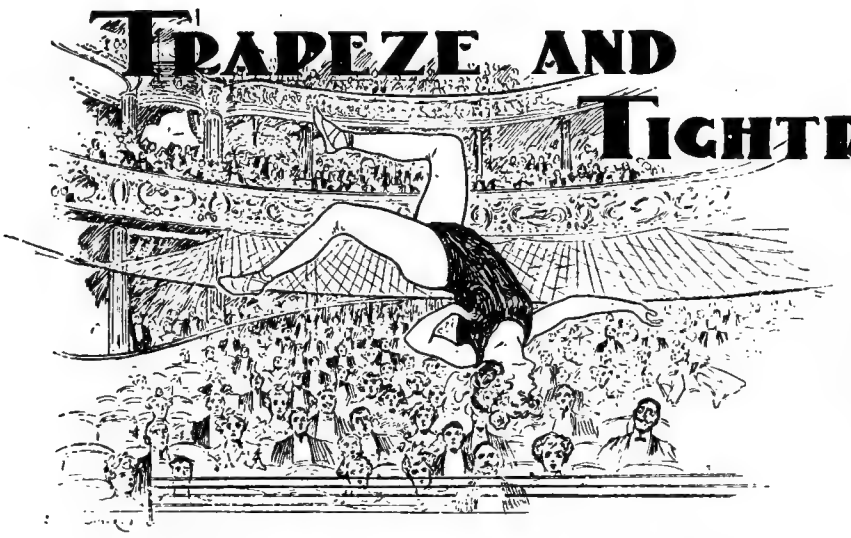
Trapeze and Tightrope



A Thrilling Article dealing with the Difficulties and Dangers Facea by Acrobats and Tight-rope Performers.

By H. J. Holmes.

Lola, the well-known trapezist, fell from a trapeze into the net and rebounded to the stage, fatally injuring her spine.

Amongst the cheerily optimistic class of people who are satisfied to pass a certain portion of their daily lives in a voluntary juggle with death, the professional gymnast holds an important place. Trapeze acrobatics, wire and rope-walking, pole-climbing, and all other aerial performances, are full of danger to those who take part in them. No matter how expert a gymnast may be in his particular line of business, a slight slip, the most trivial error of judgment, may have disastrous consequences.

The professional gymnast, whilst performing, may be said literally to carry his life in his hands, for on the tenacity of his grip his life depends. One of the most famous aerial athletes in the world recently observed to me: "At one moment you are absolutely full of confidence in your own infallibility, the next moment you find yourself plunging head downwards through space, perhaps towards death!" He spoke from his own painful experience. And it is often in the simplest trick that a fatal error is made.

It is now more than twenty years since the writer saw a daring gymnast named Artois killed whilst performing at a popular house of entertainment in Dublin. As a flying trapezist Artois was said to have no superior. His name alone was sufficient to fill any variety house in the United Kingdom. Sensational in the extreme his performance certainly was. Yet one slight error of judgment changed him, in a moment, from being one of the finest specimens of manhood in Great Britain into a human wreck.

One of his most daring feats was that of flying, blindfolded, through the air from one trapeze to another. But his fingers failed to reach the bar of the second trapeze by scarcely more than an inch. Like a log of wood the unfortunate fellow crashed down to his doom upon the hard, unprotected stage. That horrible scene was photographed indelibly in the memory of at least one spectator.

"If there had been a net, the man would not have been killed!" said the wiseacres. But Artois had scorned the idea of such a superfluous—as he thought—accessory to his performance.

He did not believe in the net as a life-saver. And it is a certainty that if a man who has made a miss actually falls into a net he may be killed just the same, as in the case of Uno the "Human Fly" at Stockton, and Lola, a trapezist, in New York, some years ago.

In the first named instance, the victim was performing the feat of travelling head downwards, sixty feet above the spectator's heads, along a series of rings through which he passed his feet alternately, hanging from a ring at each step.

The accident happened so suddenly that no one knew how it occurred until afterwards. One of the rings had snapped, and the poor fellow who had put so much faith in its strength shot downwards on to the net in an awkward position, breaking his neck. In a somewhat similar way Lola, a young and charming acrobat, met her death. She fell

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from a trapeze into the net, and, landing heavily in the net, rebounded to the stage, with fatal results.

Just as most people think there is little or no danger when a net is spread to catch a falling gymnast, so in many minds exists the false impression that an aerial performer has the power, or agility, to turn during his fall so as to land squarely upon the soles of his feet. Which is absurd.

It is part of an acrobatic gymnast's training to know how to fall should anything so undesirable interrupt the even tenour of his performance. For instance, when a man feels himself falling from any height, a net being spread below for him, he knows that the safest thing for him to do is to keep up a rotatory movement or continuous somersault, *if he can.*

Thus the tremendous shock with which even a large springy net greets a falling body will be reduced to the great advantage of the said body. But absurdly ridiculous is the theory that a falling man can so calculate matters during his thunderbolt flight downwards as to render it certain that the soles of his feet will touch the first obstruction that he meets. It sometimes happens, and further on I shall describe some such instances, that a man, after falling from a considerable height, lands on his feet. It is then that his training and instinct will tell him what to do to reduce the shock.

A gymnast with his wits about him in all emergencies—and woe betide the performer who is not so equipped—will succeed in minimising, by the elastic yielding of knees and body, the effects of an unexpected fall, and he may emerge from such a terrible experience unscathed. But, as a general rule, the man who falls from a great height, with no intervening net to catch him, has very little chance of escaping with his life—if he does so escape, as likely as not he will be terribly maimed, and may become a hopeless cripple to the end of the chapter.

"I never perform without a net, and never shall!" declared Mr. Cee-Mee, whose wonderful aerial act, in conjunction with his two charming daughters and his son, took London by storm.

"I believe in the net. If it hadn't been for one I should undoubtedly have been killed in 1884.

"I was engaged for the season 1884-85 at the old Hippodrome in Paris, and, my 'show' being of a rather novel character in sensationalism, I was getting on very well in the favour of the Parisians, who did not fail to show their approval in the usual manner.

"But it happened that my English assistant who had been with me for years, left me at a very short notice, and I had to depend on a Frenchman who knew very little about my business.

"On the night he started with me I got on very well until my concluding feat, and it was jolly nearly turning out my last feat in reality. This was a long jump from a flying trapeze through a paper-covered hoop to a second trapeze.

"Well, the hoop was a little out of its customary position when I jumped through it. The toes of my right foot touched the frame and knocked me out of my swing. I just touched the bar of the second trapeze and fell. . . .

"The old hippodrome was built high.

"The drop was close on sixty feet!

"Now, the touch of the hoop on my toes, slight as it was, gave me a revolving movement as I descended, and I assure you I turned more somersaults on that occasion than ever I had done at once in all my gymnastic experience. I simply whizzed round!

"I struck the net, 45ft. below. Upwards I rebounded like an indiarubber ball, still whizzing off involuntary somersaults. The audience rose to a man and woman, and applauded and cheered like maniacs. They thought it was 'all in the bill.'

"Next time, falling after the rebound, I landed upright on my feet, and had presence of mind enough to take the cue. I bowed and retired amidst thunders of applause.

"I met old Leonard Houck, the director, as I hurried to my room. He was all smiles.

"That's a magnificent new *coup* of yours. Cee-Mee!" he exclaimed, "we must have it every night!"

"I'll be hanged if you will!" was my emphatic response.

"So much for a net," went on Mr. Cee-Mee; "if it hadn't been there I should have been dashed to pieces.

"Only on one occasion has a net failed me. That was in 1880 at the Cirque Fernando in Paris. I used to dive nightly from my trapeze 40ft. into a net below. At that time," continued Mr. Cee-Mee smilingly, "big salaries were not overwhelming me, and my net was not made of the very best material procurable. Well, one night something happened. I dived clean through that net!

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"Marvellous to relate, I landed on my feet. I don't know to this day how it was done, and nobody was more amazed than myself to find I was without so much as a scratch!"

Mr. Cee-Mee, although, by the way, a grandfather, is still supple and plucky enough to continue his work on the flying trapeze.

An American gymnast named Fenton once had an experience which he is never likely to forget. His "big act" was of a most sensational nature. A half-inch wire rope was fixed from the highest point of the roof of the circus tent in which he performed, and dropped at an angle of about forty-five degrees downwards to a six-foot pole in the ring.

A small platform hung a few feet below the canvas roof, beside the upper end of the rope. The platform was just large enough to hold Fenton and his assistant, who were raised to it by means of a pulley and rope. The duty of the assistant was to bind the gymnast hand and foot, the hands being strapped behind the performer's back.

Running upon the cable was a grooved pulley, to which was attached a strong leather slip a foot long. Fenton's feat consisted of gripping the end of the leather slip between his teeth, and, bound as he was, shooting downwards from the platform, under the slanting wire, to the ring below, where he was caught in the arms of the ringmaster. No net was used, such an accessory being regarded as a superfluous luxury by the proprietor of this particular circus!

Pluck and dash, with a good pair of muscular jaws made the feat the "big thing" of the night's programme. It was regarded as a safe and sensational attraction.

The feat was accomplished successfully night after night in different towns.

But it is seldom that a performance of such a nature continues to run smoothly for all time. One night it was noticed that Fenton moved much slower than usual after swinging himself off the platform. The crowd waited breathlessly for his lightning scoot downwards. But something had gone wrong!

The gymnast became stationary when he had descended about three yards along the wire. The fact was, the pulley had slipped off the rope, which had

The net was of poor quality, and gave way to the acrobat, who dived from the roof straight through the net, landing, marvellous to relate, on his feet.

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The acrobat hung on by his teeth to a runner on an inclined wire, his hands and feet bound securely. The runner stuck, and death stared the unfortunate man in the face, till his attendant climbed up and rescued him.

squeezed itself between the wheel and the "box," effectually jamming further progress!

Fenton was suspended in mid-air, 40ft. above the ground, bound hand and foot, entirely helpless, hanging from a slip of leather gripped between his teeth!

The duration of his nightly journey downwards was only a few seconds. How long it was possible for him to hold on by his teeth nobody, of course, could tell.

It was plain that somebody must either descend or ascend the wire cable to his assistance. The spectators immediately below him had judiciously cleared out of the way when they realised that at any moment Fenton might be forced to let go and drop on their heads. Immediately below him was now an ugly-looking lot of bare wooden circus seats — rough planks supported on trestles.

That the unfortunate gymnast had begun to realise his terrible position was now evident. His face had turned a ghastly white in spite of his "make-up," and great beads of perspiration were visible on his brow in the glare of the naphtha lamps. His looks were those of a strong man in intense agony.

Hurried shouts rang from all sides. Advice, wise and otherwise, was hurled from a hundred throats.

Fenton had hung now for half a minute. He afterwards declared it seemed like hours. It was seen that his strength was giving out.

Suddenly a hoarse voice was heard above the clamour of many tongues.

"Hold on a bit longer, boss; I'm coming down."

It was the assistant on the platform. For a few moments he, too, had been paralysed; but he was soon seen swinging himself hand over hand along the sloping wire. At last he reached the almost exhausted gymnast.

Could he save him?

The plucky man, throwing his left arm over the rope, hung on and entwined his legs round Fenton's body to give as much support as possible. He then endeavoured with his right hand to get the wire cable into the groove of the pulley. He failed. The wire had been forced by the great weight upon it so far between the pulley and the box that his efforts were futile. He was powerless to move it.

"Cut the hand straps," came a yell from the ring.

Out flashed a knife from the brave rescuer's pocket. He opened it with his teeth. In another moment Fenton's hands

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were free. He instantly threw his arms over the wire cable.

Both men were now almost in a state of collapse. They rested for a minute, the assistant still keeping his legs around Fenton's body. Then both descended the slanting rope hand over hand, and reached the ring amidst a scene of the wildest excitement.

The most astounding cycling performance in the world is undoubtedly that of Mr. Minting, who rides, on a single wheel, saddleless, up a slender spiral wooden path only fourteen inches wide, until he reaches a height of sixty feet from the floor, when he continues his amazing journey across a platform of the same width, descending at the other end by a second spiral path.

One would scarcely think such a feat possible, but Minting accomplishes it most days and nights of his life with the greatest ease. Yet the risks attending such a display are terrible. Accidents will happen.

By a rather curious coincidence on the very night that I went to see Mr. Minting to gather some information on the subject from him, the unexpected happened. He fell off the spiral half-way up!

The wheel had wobbled, and to save himself from tumbling over to perhaps strike the lower part of the spiral, Minting sprang clear. Fortunately he landed in a friendly net, and sustained no injury.

"I'm not always so lucky," he afterwards remarked to me. "A few years ago, being engaged to give a series of performances at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, I started practising on the Saturday morning previous to the opening Monday. No net had been fixed, but that was nothing as I had often before practised without it.

"I rode up the spiral, on the wheel, to a height of fifty feet above the floor of the hall. In stepping off the pedals to return, I overbalanced myself, and for the first time in my life experienced the unpleasant sensation of the certain knowledge that I had to do a dead drop of fifty feet to a hard floor.

"As I fell, I made a clutch at the edge of the spiral with my right hand, and hung there for an instant, still holding the handle of my wheel in the left hand. Before I had time to drop it and grip the spiral with both hands I was falling!

"I felt I was done for. What could save me? Down I plunged—one travels pretty fast under such circumstances!

"I fell thirty-five feet without meeting with any obstruction. I was, of course, inside the spiral, as I had fallen from the upper and narrower portion. Thirty-five feet! Then I struck one of the wire guy ropes supporting the apparatus. To that I undoubtedly owed my life. I rebounded, my fall partly broken, and dropped an additional fifteen feet into some ornamental stuff at the foot of the spiral.

"I was picked up unconscious and carried in a cab to the hospital. Everybody in the hall thought, of course, that I was done for, but the surgeons soon declared that no bones were broken. As a matter of fact I was able to fulfil my engagement on the Monday evening!

"In January 1890, at Cook's Circus, Edinburgh, I fell from the spiral a distance of twenty-five feet. I was unconscious for five days but in three week's time I performed again at the Folies Bergere, Paris.

"A very extraordinary accident happened to me whilst performing during stormy weather in a tent circus in Ireland in 1898. I had ridden safely almost to the top of the spiral when the roof of the tent was suddenly blown in upon me! I was, of course, borne to the ground together with all my paraphernalia upon the heads of the people below, but was so 'wrapped up' in the canvas that I was unhurt. The tent had been well soaked with the torrents of rain, otherwise the flaring lights would have set the canvas on fire and added to the horror of the situation. But, somehow, everybody managed to scramble out of the *débris* without serious injury."

Perhaps a still more remarkable accident wherein the elements figured conspicuously, was that which happened in a corrugated iron-roofed circus on the outskirts of Buda Pesth a year or two ago.

An aerial fixed bar performance was in progress, when a flash of lightning struck the iron roof, the electric current was conveyed along the steel bars—which were screwed to the roof—and the hands of the performer received such a shock that the unfortunate man inadvertently let go his hold and fell a distance of thirty-five feet, alighting on the shoulders of an astonished spectator, who was seriously injured. The gymnast escaped with some slight burns on the hand.

There is a touch of humour in the incident related in connection with a well-known English travelling circus, when the "Cannon King" was shot out of a gun, by an underrated steel spring, with such force as to carry him, not into the waiting net, but clean through the space always left for ventilating purposes, between the roof and the side of the tent. The astonished king finally

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alighted on a handy hayrick in the next field! The presence of that hayrick made a somewhat humorous incident of what might have been a very grim tragedy.

De Witt and Burns, the clever pole-climbing gymnasts who were recently at the Alhambra, relate an experience of theirs whilst catering to the public taste for sensational performances in Louisville, Kentucky, a little while back.

The entertainment of the pair of gymnasts I name consists in part of one man performing astonishing acrobatic feats whilst poised on the top of a long slender ash pole, balanced on the strong chest of the other.

"My partner," said Mr. De Witt to the writer, "was just in the middle of one of his most difficult feats on a thirty foot pole, when I heard a sharp 'crack'!"

"The pole had broken in the centre!

"Almost instinctively I put out my arms to save my falling chum. I did not catch him, but my touch, as he passed through my arms with a rush, helped to break the effect of the fall, and, doubtless, saved his life. A few big bruises resulted, but he soon got rid of them with careful treatment.

"The pole on examination showed plain signs of having been tampered with, but, although a rival was, and still is, under suspicion, the culprit has never been brought to book. Now the pole is always carefully scrutinised before use."

The one-wheel cyclist rode up a steep incline, and suddenly the roof of the tent was blown in by the wind. The cyclist, his wheel, and the canvas roof were hurled to the ground.

Amongst the many perils that a professional gymnast must guard against is that of treachery. He has to be very careful not to incur the ill-will of any evil-disposed person connected with the place in which the performance is given.

English artistes who take up engagements in Continental cities are, from past experience, particular in examining their apparatus immediately before trusting their bodies thereon, and, as a further precautionary measure, tips are almost invariably paid in advance!

A well-known trapezist told me that a man dare not under any provocation whatever make an enemy of a subordinate in a Continental hall or circus.

"I was performing in one of the best establishments in Vienna some years ago when I was not so wise as I am now," he continued, "and had a bit of a row with a hand employed behind.

"A few nights afterwards during my turn on the stage, I caught hold of a length of rope which I always used for swinging myself from one of my platforms to another 10ft. apart.

"Just as I had put a bit of my weight upon it, to my horror I felt

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the rope was giving way above. In another second I should have been dashed to the stage below. As I was falling forward I had only just time to *jump* for the other platform. It was a narrow squeak, but I managed to span the 10ft. with very few inches to spare. I did not at first think of foul play. I put it down to the fault of a bad hitch-knot I had made. It was only when I found that the 'hand' I had rowed with had disappeared from the theatre on the same night, that I suspected him of the murderous trick."

Bendita, the unfortunate performer who met his death from his invention, the Bending Mast, at the Crystal Palace a year ago, had placed a strange reliance on his apparatus. This was a pole or mast of laminated wood, so built up, to a length of about fifty feet, as to be always pliant, but, as he asserted, never breakable. The sad accident resulting in his death disproved the poor fellow's theory.

Before he was engaged at the Crystal Palace he had endeavoured time after time to secure an opening at another well-known place of entertainment nearer the West End. He volunteered to give a specimen of his agility on his patent mast.

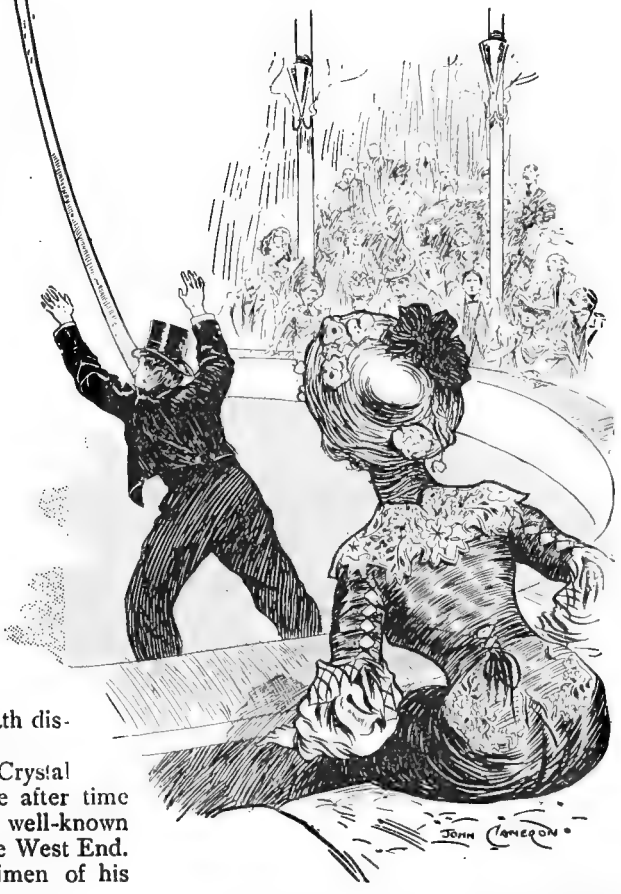
The opportunity was given. But no contract was ever signed. Why?

For the simple reason that during the exhibition "turn" the mast collapsed and the man was hurled a distance of nearly forty feet. The doom which he met later at Sydenham would have come earlier had he not landed on the well-springed seat of a commodious stall chair.

In a large public hall in Spain, a circus show was going on. The hall was crowded with an enthusiastic multitude, for was not La Bella Catalina, the celebrated performer on the tight-rope, billed to appear?

All was going well; the performance was at its height, when suddenly a crack was heard. The rope on which La Bella Catalina was performing was fastened to a hook in the wall high up.

The hook gave way, and down came the rope with the performer, crashing through the air into the net. The net, high above the ground, by its elasticity caused the girl to rebound, throwing her violently against the wall, breaking her arm, and badly shaking her.



One performer balanced a long mast, while his brother acrobat performed acrobatic feats at the top. The mast broke one day, and the performer was badly bruised, falling from a height of some thirty feet.

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MR. OWEN FERE

A Cricket Story

By

Halliwell Sutcliffe.

Owen Fere is a terror. He wears his hair as long as a fiddle, and he parts it in the middle; he walks as if he was going half a mile and had all the day to get there; he writes stuff they call poetry, and Captain Carris says—I haven't read the beastly stuff myself—that any average man would be ill on the spot after a verse or two. He fancies himself a lot, does Fere, and doesn't seem to know when he comes to stay with my people that I'm head of the school and have a batting average of fifty-two point three. Treats me as if I was a kid—funny, isn't it, when I have to shave twice a week? Captain Carris says once a week would do, but he's only chaffing.

Owen Fere is sweet on Frances—that's my sister. And when Owen Fere is sweet on a girl, he kind of *crawls*. Ugh!

Frances is pretty, they say. I don't know, because a fellow's sister never seems much to a fellow, you know. Sees too much of 'em perhaps. Any way, she's lady tennis champion for Brookshire, and that's something. Frances is a bit soft, though; fancies she ought to go in for high art and culture. My hat, when she can be tennis champion, and good at hockey and ride as straight as a man after hounds!

But then a girl's a girl, just as a ferret is a ferret. She's made so from the start, and sometimes it seems funny. *I* wouldn't touch Owen Fere with a hockey-stick, but she didn't seem to mind his sickly style. She read up Browning and all those jokers who try to puzzle you with a lot of words just because they know you would be over them every time at cricket.

Well, we had a house party, and we were all as keen as nuts on cricket except Owen Fere. He used to smile with a sort of "bless you, my children" air when we went out to practise at the nets; but then he overheard Frances saying one day that she would like every man to be a cricketer; and he thought it over, and we had fun.

Fere was an awfully rummy chap when he took an idea into his head. He didn't go at it as you or I would have done—he *rushed*. The very next morning he came to me, as I was fixing a rat-trap down by the stables, and he smiled like ginger-nuts, sweet and sticky.

"I have an idea," says he.

"Oh," says I, setting the trap without looking at him.

"Cricket is so graceful, so poetic. The long ripples of the turf——"

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"No ripples when the mower's been over it," I mumbled.

Fere went on as if he hadn't noticed me. It's a trick he has.

"The white figures of the players against the further green—the swift, compelling motion of the bat—all is so beautiful. Do you know, I have a fancy to learn this king of games."

I stood up and looked at him, and I grinned a bit. "I'll teach you," I said.

He looked stickier than ever, and waved his hands about. "How kind the world is!" said he. "Even the growing youths are eager to teach one——"

"I've grown," said I.

He smiled again—Jove how he smiled! "To be sure," he said. "And you will come with me to urge the leathern sphere?"

"Don't know," I said doubtfully. "What is 'urging the leathern sphere'?"

"Plying the ball with yielding willow."

"Oh, you mean practising at the nets. Come on, I'm your man!"

We went down together. Mr. Fere said he'd bat first. I tossed down a rotter, and it spread his bails.

"The very poetry of motion!" he cried.

"Try another," I said, after he'd put his wickets up again.

I sent a yorker. He turned again to fix his stumps. I laughed, and so did he. "I shall learn this king of games!" said he.

I wondered, and bowled him a long hop. He shoved his bat in the way of it, somehow, and it trickled back to me. "That, surely, is what you call a drive?" said he.

"Yes," says I; "a young 'un."

Frances had come down by this time. She seemed a bit doubtful. Mr Fere gave her a bow, like one of those Jugginses in flimsy waistcoats who fool about in operas.

"Your young brother is making a cricketer of me," he said.

Young brother! I snorted and bowled him a hot one that hit him on the leg.

"Ah!" said he, dancing about a bit, "no poetry is without its pain! Exquisite, soul-strengthening pain."

And then he got ready again, and he hit the ball over my head, and smiled as if it wouldn't have been caught every time.

"I—I thought you had never played, Mr. Fere?" says Frances, soft as a peach. She is that way when she wants to kid a chap into believing himself what he isn't.

"I am learning fast," says he, and swipes at a shooter, and gets his wickets spread.

Captain Carris had strolled down by this time. He was smiling. So was I. I bowled old Fere twelve times in fourteen balls, and then he said he would "welcome a little leisure after toil."

Captain Carris was still smiling. "I say, Fere, you must join us in our match on Thursday," he said.

"Eh? Play in a match?" stammered Fere. And then he looked at Frances, and plucked up courage—silly ass!—and asked if we would coach him up during the next three days.

"Rather!" said Carris.

Frances looked a bit annoyed, and tried to say something, and stopped. But Mr. Owen Fere began to fancy himself, I could see, and looked across at Frances and sort of melted, as usual.

"One can learn a great deal in three days," laughed he.

"Yes, by Jove, you can!" cried Captain Carris.

"The kingly game attracts me, I confess—the perfect rhythm of willow and of leathern ball—the cool, green sweep of lawn—the swallows envying the round ball's flight."

"You've hit it!" cried Carris cordially. 'I fancied, by the look in his eye, he meant to show up Mr. Owen Fere.

"Perhaps, with my young friend's help, and yours, I may—what is your phrase—knock up a score on Thursday?"

"You will," said Carris. "You have the making of a batsman in you."

"Captain Carris——" began Frances, and stopped, and looked as if lunch had disagreed with her. She didn't seem to care to see Fere make a fool of himself.

But Carris pretended not to hear. He'd been queer with Frances lately; and I was sorry, because girls have got to marry sometime, and I think a chap has a right to a decent brother-in-law.

Owen Fere was a first-class fool. There was no denying it, unless one happened to be a girl. My hat! It makes me cold all over to think of it. Suppose one *had* been a girl? It was all a chance either way, like being shot in a battle. But I'm jolly glad I wasn't shot!

Well, we played our fish all we knew. We bowled at him, and sometimes missed his stumps by accident; we let him bowl at us, and hit as hard as we could for laughing. We chucked catches to him, and watched the gradual skinning of his thumbs and fingers.

And we laughed.

Frances didn't. She grew horrider and horrider to Captain Carris, and softer to the poet.

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"Look here," I said to her one night—it was the night before the match with the village eleven—"what's up, Frances?"

"I don't understand," says she, drawing herself up.

But I'd seen Frances draw herself up about a hundred and seventy times, and I'd stopped bothering about it.

"Rot!" says I. "What's Captain Carris done?"

"Nothing, that I can see," says she, like an ice on a wafer biscuit. "I wish he had."

"He's made five centuries this year for Deepshire," I put in.

"James has made seven, if it comes to that," says she, cool as a cucumber sandwich.

"James knows his wicket—Carris made *his* hundreds anywhere you like."

"Well, Dick? This is very interesting, doubtless, for Lillywhite and Wisden, but I can't see that it affects me particularly."

"Owen Fere is such a bally ass!" I put in.

"Because he can't make centuries?"

"Yes, and because—because—he's such a *jolly* ass—you ask Carris."

"Captain Carris may have his own opinion. I have mine," says she.

"Opinions!" says I, with a sniff. "Centuries are what I go by."

"Yes, boys do," she said, with her cool, aggravating way.

"Any way, Carris doesn't go printing twaddle. You bet! He had enough lines to do at school without fagging about 'em now. Poetry! I'd rather trade in tin-ware."

"You're seventeen, aren't you, Dick?" says she quietly, like a cat before she sticks her claws out.

"I'm nearly eighteen."

"Wait till you're thirty, and then you'll *know*."

She left me with that, and followed the gleam of Owen Fere's cigarette through the dusk. Cheek, I called it. Frances wasn't more than twenty herself, and she was a girl, too.

Fere, I fancy, talked a lot of rot to her as they strolled about together in the garden. Any way, she had her queer, mushy look on when they came in and pretended they'd been studying the motions of the stars. Stars! They're all right, but Frances doesn't do much looking up at 'em as a rule.

Captain Carris was standing by the piano when they came in. Miss Fossdyke was singing something about her heart being "like a frozen mere, because love's meaning was not clear," and Carris was yawning as he turned over the leaves. Frances looked at him as they came in, and drew herself up—the way I told you of a bit since—and wondered, in a hard sort of voice, what it must feel like to have one's heart like a frozen mere.

"I can guess fairly well," says Carris, with a knifey look at her.

"Indeed? Then you have the better of me. Drawing-room songs are such nonsense, Mr. Fere"—turning to the poet-Johnnie—"unless—unless *you* write the words."

Preen himself? I guess he did—like a scraggy turkey-cock when the hens are all cluck-clucking round him.

"Have you heard my last song?" says he softly. He thought no one was listening, but I happened to be on the other side of the sofa they'd sat down on.

"No," says she. "*Do* tell me what the words are."

"I wrote them with your face before me," he began, then smoothed his hair a bit more, grinned, and started off like ninety.

The red rose witnesses my pain,
The nightingale my woe.
I see thee through a tear-dimmed rain,
My love of long ago.

I see thee, beautiful and pure
As dewdrops in the dawn,
And thou dost bid me still endure
The world's unheeding scorn.

Oh, love, whose voice is sweeter far,
Than nightingale's lament,
Thou art to me a guiding star
From heaven's own gateway sent.

Fere regularly hugged himself when he had done, and Frances looked a bit mooney. As for me, I did my best to keep from laughing. Fancy Frances being a dewdrop in the dawn! I'd seen her eat teas after tennis-matches, and I knew!

"So you are going to play against the village team to-morrow?" says she, after a while.

"Yes. But never mind that—I—I wished to ask you to-night—will you—will you be the star and moon and sun of all my life?"

Didn't know what he meant myself; but Frances did, it seemed, for she went white and pink, and: "This is very sudden, Mr. Fere," says she.

"Not if you understand the weariness of loving, as I understand it! Night after night to watch the stars, and think of all that may and may not be—Frances, tell me, am I to hope?"

I sat snug as midsummer in my chair. It

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was pretty cool, this, with all the others at the far end of the room.

"I—I do not know," says Frances, holding down her head in a silly sort of way

"Ah, but you must tell me! I can't bear the tense and hopeless questionings — the soul that longs for, and the merit that does not deserve."

I'd heard of proposals, and wondered now if they were all like this. If so, there were more Jugginses in the world than I'd guessed. I nearly jumped up and told Frances to say "No"; and the next minute I was glad I hadn't, for she turns to him, and, "Mr. Fere," says she, "I will—will give you your answer after to-morrow's match. If you score fifty——"

His face dropped for a minute; then he seemed to pull himself together. "If I score fifty, you will marry me?" says he.

"Yes," says Frances.

And I grinned. It was easy to see she was only putting the poor beggar off. The village bowling happened to be pretty good of its sort, and Owen Fere had as much chance of scoring fifty to-morrow as the man in the moon. Only, why couldn't she say "No" to him, fair and square, like a man? It came of being born a girl, I supposed, and thanked my stars again that trousers had been my destiny.

Captain Carris was pretty down on his luck that evening, and went off by-and-bye to play billiards. I caught him as he went out, and told him what Frances had said she'd do if the poet-Johnnie scored fifty in to-morrow's match. His face lit up like fireworks, and he slapped me on the back.

"That's good luck, Dick," he said. "If Mr. Fere makes fifty to-morrow, I'll—I'll swallow the bat he makes them with."

I wondered, as I went upstairs, how much

"I—I—wished to ask you to-night—will you—will you be the star and moon and sun of all my life?"

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they paid the poet-Johnnie to make an ass of himself like that. A good lot, I fancied, to make it worth his while. And then I wondered what sort of an ass he would make of himself to-morrow; and I went to sleep with a sort of hazy picture of Mr. Owen Fere playing "leathern spheres" and getting his wickets spread.

He was practising at the nets all next morning, and seemed to be getting the hang of the thing a bit better. I only bowled him twice out of every three balls, that is, and once or twice—when I took the bat—he managed to get my stumps. How he did it I don't know—perhaps by the law of chances that our mathematical master talks about at school; it does seem likely, if you come to think of it, that one ball out of fifty should be a decent one.

Fere was all in a glow, I could see. He saw that fifty score coming nearer. Captain Carris was very solemn all the time—egged the poor beggar on, you know, and made him fancy himself twice as much, which wasn't a bit necessary.

"You'll make the score of the afternoon!" he cried as we went up to lunch.

"Do you think so?" murmured the poet. And then he smiled—I knew why. "I would rather make fifty this afternoon," says he, "than write the finest poem in the language."

"So would I," grunted Carris, in a dry kind of way.

Well, we set off for the village after lunch. We'd made a team up, you know, out of the fellows staying with us and the grooms and the gardener and the gardener's boy, and we fancied we were going to lick the village eleven all to pieces.

Carris—he captained our side—lost the toss, and the village chaps batted.

"Where would you like to field?" Carris asked the poet-Johnnie as we went out.

"Oh, anywhere," says he, with a lofty air as if he was better than G. H. Hirst in any part of the field.

"What do you say to mid-on, then?"

"Delighted, if—ah—you will tell me where mid-on is."

He hadn't learnt this from Lillywhite, evidently. Carris grinned, and showed him where he ought to stand.

"You'll have to cross after the over, you know," he said.

"What—what is over?" says the poet.

"End of every six balls—you'll see the field moving—cross over to the corresponding side of the wickets."

"Do you think they will send me any catches?" He seemed to be a bit sick, now he was in it all, with Frances and the rest of them looking on from the pavilion.

"Hope so, old man! Don't miss 'em if they come, that's all!"

Play began. Nothing came to Owen Fere for half-an-hour, and then he got a beauty. It would have hit him, so he shoved his hands down nervously, and held the ball somehow. We clapped him all we knew—and he stood there, and smiled at it, and reckoned he had meant to catch it.

The village fellows scored eighty-eight for nine wickets, and they took so long about it that the sun was getting down hill a bit when the last man came in. First ball he had he drove to mid-on, and it struck Owen Fere in the chest. He sort of doubled up, and gasped, and looked about him.

"Oh, you ass!" cried Captain Carris—he was always keen as nuts whatever the match was—"Why didn't you hold it?"

The poet gasped again. "I—I was watching the shadows lengthen on the velvet turf," said he.

"They'll keep," growled Carris. "You watch the ball instead."

Well, as it happened, the very next ball was driven hard to the poet; and he chucked his hands at it anyhow; and it stuck somehow. Never saw a chap with such luck!

He went up to Frances as soon as we reached the pavilion, and fancied himself, and kidded them all over again about the two catches. Then Carris came to him, with a quiet look I knew, and, "Fere," says he, "will you open the innings with me?"

I laughed out—couldn't help it—but Owen Fere didn't see it. He put on his pads, and he put on his gloves; and he went out with Carris as if he'd opened innings all his life.

"The willow, the supple, pliant willow!" he was saying as they passed us. "How many stories has it listened to, as it grew beside the sedge-lined mere!"

"You keep a straight bat, and never mind the sedge-lined mere and whispered stories," says Carris.

Carris took the first over, and hit a couple of boundaries. Then it was Fere's turn. I looked at Frances, and noticed that she seemed jumpy—a bit inclined to laugh, and a bit inclined to frown, and a lot of other things only a girl knows about.

You wouldn't believe it, but the poet-Johnnie's luck kept up. He couldn't bat for nuts, and yet the first ball he had he lashed

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out at—drove it past mid-off—and scored a boundary. The ball came in on the on-side, but that didn't matter to a poet. The next ball missed his stumps by a shaver, and the next he tried to block, and managed to get it away for another boundary through short-slip's hands. I grinned like fifty, and Frances began to clap. Another coat of varnish would have settled Fere's innings for the rest of the over, but somehow he pulled through. It wasn't cricket, but he seemed to have the luck.

Captain Carris was out in the next over, and I followed in. I looked across the pitch at Fere, and I didn't smile as I'd expected to. What had come to the beggar, I don't know —*he'd* have said love, or bosh of that sort—but something had. He looked as cool as could be, and he held his bat with a clumsy sort of easiness, as if he had known it all his life. Carris had been out to the last ball of the over, and I watched—my mouth wide open—as Fere stood up to the bowler. He didn't play the ball—*I* can swear to that—but he pushed his bat out at it, and touched it by mistake, and blessed if it didn't go past short-slip again to the boundary. He sat tight after that for three balls—fuddled them, you know, and stopped them anyhow, and then he took a blind swipe and landed another boundary.

I was so surprised that I mulled the very first ball I had, and spooned it up, and trotted back the way I had come with the half of a pair of spectacles to my credit. The gardener went in next, and scored a few, and then he left; and, if you'll believe it, that beggar Owen Fere still kept his end up!

I was sitting beside Frances in the pavilion. "Rummy, isn't it," I said, as Fere played blind-hookey again with a yorker and swiped a boundary.

Frances seemed jumpy—very. She was watching the scoring-board. "He has made twenty-five," she said faintly.

I grinned.

"And if he doubles it, he'll—eh, Frances?"

She turned to me, her face the colour of the governor's last prize dahlia.

"I—I was watching the shadows lengthen on the velvet turf," said he.

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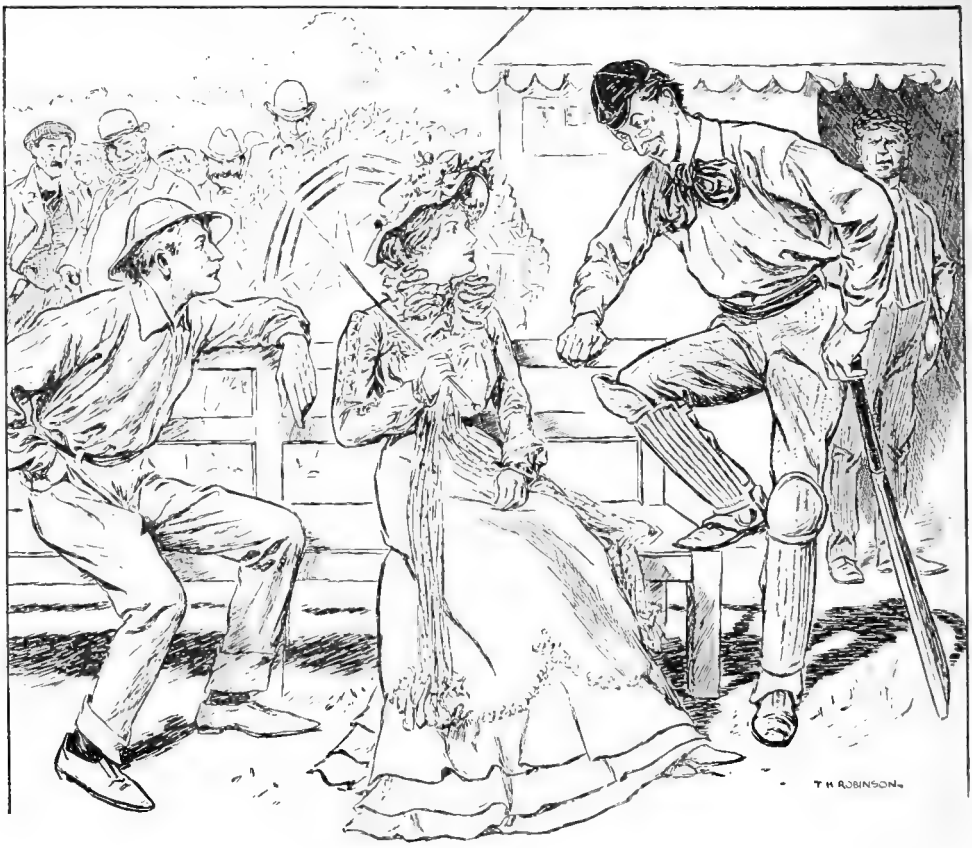

He leaned like a lily over Frances.

"What do you mean, Dick?" says she.

"Oh, nothing," says I. "Only I happened to be behind the sofa last night, and I heard——"

"Dick, Dick. He *can't* make fifty!" she cried.

"Shouldn't wonder. There! That's another boundary. Something's come to the chap. It isn't poetry this time, and it isn't cricket; but he's scoring!"

Frances went quiet of a sudden, and Carris, too, looked a bit sick as he came and sat down beside her. I edged off then, because a fellow's no business to listen to a particular chum when the chum's talking to a sister he wants him to marry. But I couldn't help hearing, for all that.

"What the mischief is happening?" said Captain Carris. "I thought all this was a bit of fun, and this poet-chap is going to win the match for us."

"Oh, don't," says Frances.

She hadn't been ordinarily civil to Carris lately, but she seemed all out of gear this afternoon.

"Why?" says he, sharp like the click of a maxim-gun.

"Because I made a foolish—a very foolish promise to Mr. Fere."

"What was it?" he said with another click.

I could never stand up against Carris when he put on that tone, so it wasn't to be expected Frances would. She looked shivery, too.

"I—I promised—oh, how shall I tell you?"

Click from the Captain. "You've got to," says he, firing another cartridge from the magazine.

"Well—I—he was so bothersome, you know—and I—I think I must have been bewitched—I promised to—to marry him if he scored fifty this afternoon."

Carris whistled. "It is nonsense!" says he, glancing at the scoring-board.

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I thought Frances was going to blub. "It—it isn't nonsense," says she looking at the board too—"He—he's made thirty-seven, Captain Carris, and—and I never broke a promise yet."

Mr. Owen Fere was glaring at the pavilion with a big look of "Up guards and at 'em," after swiping another four. He was rotten as could be, as a bat, and yet he fluked 'em somehow.

Captain Carris *click-clicked*—Maxim working strong—and Frances looked ready to faint. Girls do faint when they don't see any other way out of it, and I pitied Captain Carris. He'd have to go and fetch water in his hat by-and-by, if Fere scored any more—and what a jolly ass a fellow must feel when he's out of a book and *in* a mess of that sort.

"It's absurd," says Carris. "Do you mean to say that you will keep to a foolish promise of that kind?"

Frances pulled herself together. Comes of a plucky family, you know. "I shall," says she, stiff as Wellington at Waterloo. "I never broke a promise yet, Captain Carris."

Another footling hit from Owen Fere, and his score was up to forty-five. Frances gave a sort of sob. Captain Carris swore—at least he meant it that way. Then Carris got hold of his curb-chain, and jerked it, and, "Frances," says he, "I wish to heaven I had never tried to play a silly trick on this Owen Fere; but it's done. Suppose he is out under fifty, will you ——"

"Look!" cried Frances, and Captain Carris swore again—or meant it—as that flukey beggar scored another four.

It was "over" then, and Carris looked as if he was in battle.

"If he's out under fifty, will you—will you marry *me*?" he cried.

Frances just turned to him, as if she'd been thirsty for a week and he offered her a drink. "Yes—oh, yes!" she cried.

They both sighed like fits when the field changed over, and the gardener hit a single, and Fere stood up to hit the single needed to make his fifty. I felt rummy myself, I own; for no fellow likes to see his sister make an ass of herself.

Dickson, the village blacksmith, bowled a beauty to Fere, a nice long-hop, that he ought to have hit for four any day of the week. He tried to, and it went racketing up and up and up.

Frances began to laugh and cry all in a breath. "Oh! he has done it ——"

"Wait a bit," says Captain Carris.

And she waited, 'cos she'd got to. Girls never wait unless they've got to, and not always then. Up, and up, and up went that beastly ball, and the long-field was Smiggles, who couldn't catch a ball at two yards. Smiggles boshed it, of course, at the first try—and Frances called out "Oh!" and Captain Carris said "Hang it!" so plain you couldn't miss it—and then that old idiot Smiggles collared it at the third attempt, and Owen Fere was out for forty-nine.

He came up smiling, and crossed to where we were, and leaned like a lily over Frances. I thought it was rough that a lily should have luck like that at a game it hadn't learnt.

"Your promise!" says he, cool as could be.

Captain Carris glowered at him, but he didn't seem to mind.

"What promise, Mr Fere?" says Frances.

"Why, that if I made fifty——"

Frances seemed to be somebody else. I fancy she had looked at Fere, and looked at Captain Carris, and was jolly glad for what she had escaped. "But you only made forty-nine," says she, demure as a field-mouse; "and so—and so——"

"You've won the match for us, at any rate, old fellow," says Carris.

So I've got a decent brother-in-law, after all. But it was a near squeak!

The Photographer said, "Cats!"

This amusing Picture appears in the
JULY NUMBER OF "PEARSON'S MAGAZINE,"
illustrating a screamingly funny story, called
"ROGER'S DAY."
The July Number is the CORONATION NUMBER,
and will contain 16 pages beautifully printed in colour.
The price is 6d., as usual.
Be sure you buy it. On sale June 24.
Please note the date.

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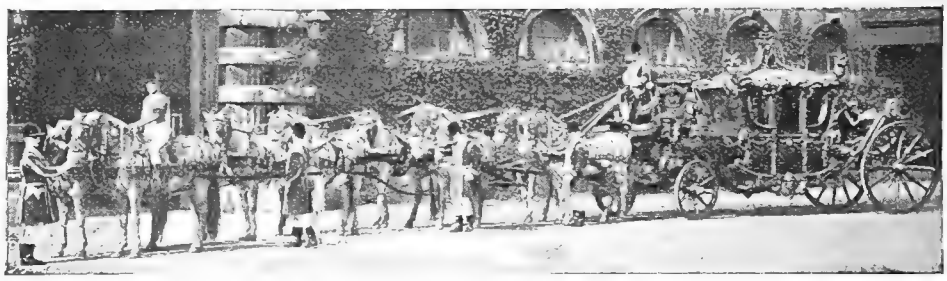
ROYALTY ON WHEELS



The Full State Coach with driver and postillions. It weighs four tons, and cost £7500 to build.

An interesting article about the chief carriages used by King Edward and the Royal Family.

By Stephen Bunn.

In a list of the carriages belonging to our Royal House, one must give first place to what, through historic associations, splendour, and acknowledged precedence, is *the* Royal State Coach of these realms. George III. drove in it to open his first parliament, and the successive sovereigns, including King Edward, have used it on similar occasions. Queen Victoria used it twice: for her coronation, and when she first opened parliament in person. In fact, it has probably been used only a score of times during the last hundred years. At the moment it is of particular interest, as it is to be used by the King at the Coronation ceremony, though its cumbersome bulk and antique discomfort will be exchanged for the ease of the New Full State Coach during the lengthy procession through the streets of London on June 27th.

A description of this elaborate chariot may not be out of place. Its weight is four tons; its length, 24 feet; its width, 8 feet 3 inches; its height, 12 feet; and its cost, including accessories, was something over £7500. In front, the driver's seat is supported by two figures in the attitude of drawing the body of the coach by means of cables over their shoulders. Images behind bear the Imperial fasces, with two tridents above. A huge escallop shell, luxuriant with sea growths, supports the driver's feet; the attachment of the bar is hidden under a smaller shell, itself terminating in dolphins' heads; the pole represents a bundle of lances, while the wheels are of the so-called Chariot of Triumph pattern.

Photo by L. W. Green.

The Full State Coach renovated and altered for the Coronation of King Edward VII.

Palm trees support the heavy, richly ornate roof, where the Imperial Crown is borne by three boys, the genii of the three kingdoms, adorned with festooned laurel, holding emblems of Royalty and Nobility in their hands.

In this magnificent

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equipage the designer, Sir William Chambers, availed himself of every opportunity for decorative construction, and the result is a carriage elaborately ornate.

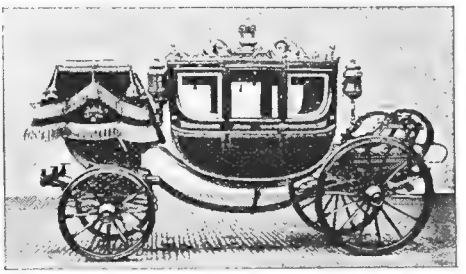
Another regally appointed coach, which is of particular interest in connection with the memory of Queen Victoria, is the semi-state coach, generally known as the Dublin glass coach. It was built on the occasion of the royal visit to Ireland in 1852, and was chiefly used for state functions by her late Majesty.

In the Coronation procession and at the ceremony at Westminster Abbey it will be used by the Prince and Princess of Wales, and on that account has been further decorated with his crest and motto and also the badge of Wales. The body, front, and foot of this carriage are painted lake and vermilion picked out in gold; the wheels and frame are vermilion and gold.

The ornamentation is lighter than on the Full State Coach—the large crown on the top is supported by gilt scroll work of graceful design; there are smaller crowns on the corners, and along the edges, in gilt work, are the rose, the shamrock, the thistle, and the pine—emblems of the Empire.

There are, besides, in the Royal mews, some twenty more or less elaborate carriages, among which are eleven landaus, in colour, scheme, and general design resembling the Dublin coach. But their external decoration is more scanty, being reduced to a crown at each corner. These, and a number that have been recently built after the same pattern, will be used in the Coronation procession by foreign representatives and other distinguished visitors.

During the Coronation procession through the London streets their Majesties will drive in the new state landau lately built, which is far less unwieldy and ornate than the Full State Coach that is to convey them to Westminster Abbey.



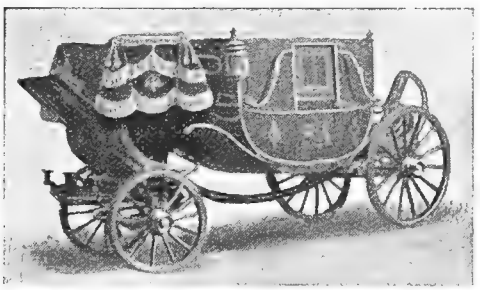
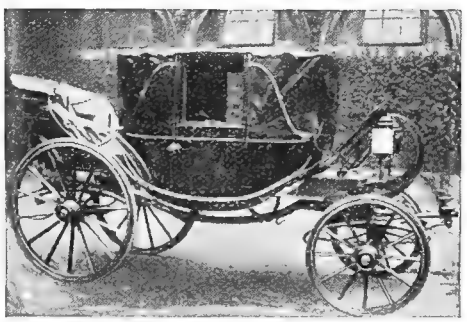


Photo by Edgar Scamell.

The Dublin glass coach, which will be used at the Coronation by the Prince and Princess of Wales.



Dress landau to be used by the Indian Princes at the Coronation.

The so-called Jubilee carriage used in the two Jubilees by Queen Victoria and on every notable occasion since.

This new addition to the Royal equipages is something like the state landau which Queen Victoria used at the Diamond Jubilee ceremonies; but it is somewhat higher and roomier. The body is claret colour, richly ornamented with the royal arms. It is lined with crimson satin, in place of blue tints usually employed in Royal carriages, and fitted with special springs and rubber tyres, so that their Majesties will have not only a handsome but also a very comfortable carriage during that wearying procession. It will be drawn by eight of the King's well-known cream ponies harnessed in red Morocco and gilt metal work.

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Photo by Russell & Sons.

The sociable which Queen Victoria used frequently at Windsor.

Besides these and many other semi-state carriages there are a great number of private landaus, broughams, and vehicles such as droskies, sleighs, pony and donkey chaises — familiar in "at home" photos of the late Queen—and the basket cradle carriage, which so often contained King Edward and his brothers and sisters in childhood days. In the Windsor Mews alone there are about one hundred vehicles of one kind or another.

Queen Victoria liked to drive in an open carriage; even in threatening weather Her Majesty rarely started out for a drive with the landau closed. She seldom used her more elaborate equipages. On State occasions, except when great display was inevitable, she usually drove in what is known as the Jubilee coach, which is really an old comfortable landau decked out on occasion as a semi-state carriage.

The King's taste inclines the other way. A lover of tradition and historic ceremonial, he, to use a popular phrase, keeps up great state on the occasion of big functions, and in his private capacity usually employs a closed carriage. This happens very often, for he rarely walks in town, preferring to ride in one of his many easy-running broughams.

His favourite town carriage, which he often

Photo by Russell & Sons.

The old basket chair in which the King was driven when a child.

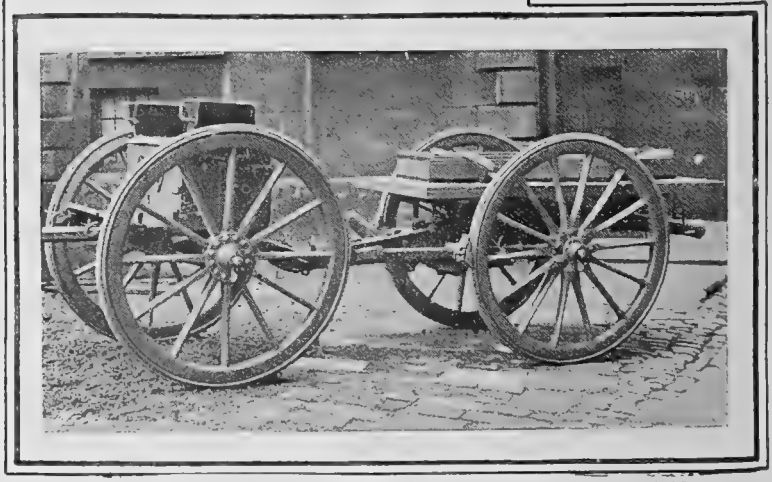

Photo by Carl Hentschel Ltd.

The fifteen-pounder gun carriage on which the late Queen Victoria took her last sad journey through London.

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uses when visiting his personal friends, is a smart one-horse brougham with rubber-tyred wheels. Within it is fitted with modern carriage comforts, the usual smoker's conveniences, a carriage clock, and an electric reading lamp.

When the King and Queen drive together in their private capacity, paying calls on friends, etc., their favourite carriage is a pair-horse single brougham. In driving to and from railway stations, or going out in the evening to entertainments, their Majesties usually employ a so-called "Clarence" brougham, three of which are in the coach-houses at Buckingham Palace.

A "Sociable" is Queen

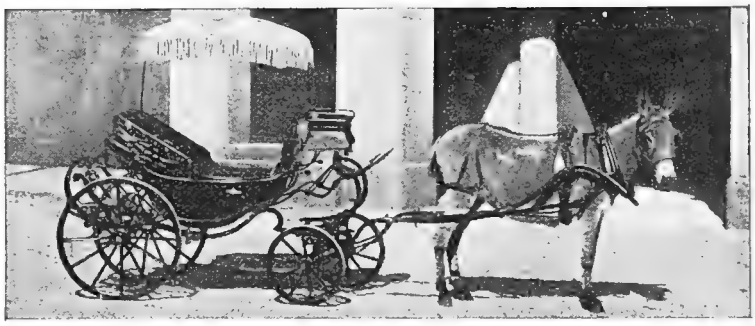

Photo by Hughes & Mullins.
A miniature barouche at one time used largely by Queen Victoria, but more lately by her great grandchildren.

Photo by [illegible]
"Sam" and the late Queen's favourite garden chair.

Photo by Hughes & Mullins.
Her late Majesty Queen Victoria in her favourite cane garden chair with Princess Beatrice of Schleswig-Holstein.

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A one-horse sleigh designed by Prince Consort, and frequently used by Queen Victoria. This illustration is taken from an original drawing by the late Prince Consort, and is reproduced by permission of Messrs. Hooper.

Alexandra's favourite open carriage, particularly one known as "The Russian Sociable," which was presented to her by the Tsarina some years ago. Last summer this carriage was very frequently employed in London, their Majesties often riding in it to Richmond and East Sheen on Sundays.

At Sandringham most of the carriages are open, barouches and landaus. The Queen may often be seen taking a drive in a smart Victoria.

At his Norfolk home, the King is simply a country gentleman and recognised as such by the country folk. There he no longer needs the seclusion of a brougham to avoid the well-intentioned, though at times trying, demonstrations of enthusiastic subjects.

He drives to races in a brake or a drag, and through the country in various kinds of open

This sleigh was built from the designs and drawings of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Her Majesty used frequently to drive about in the winter in this sleigh. (Reproduced by permission of Messrs. Hooper.)

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vehicles; but only in one case does he drive himself, when, with his agent, he makes a round of his estates in a four wheel dog-cart known as the Suffield Cart.

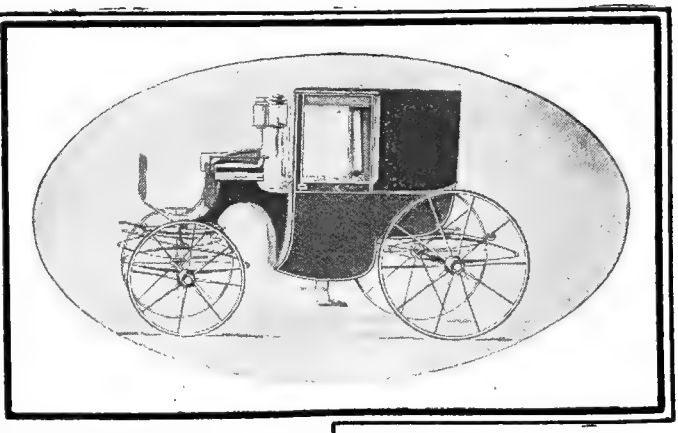
His taste for motoring is now well known.

His first drive in a motor car occurred some years ago when Chevalier Réné de Knyff piloted him about in Paris. In 1899 he gave an order to the Daimler Co., of Coventry, for a 6 horse-power phaeton, and this carriage pleased him so much that he ordered two large 12 horse-power cars for use on his Sandringham estate, one of which is constantly used by himself and his consort, and the other for conveying gamekeepers and various estate officials from place to place in the conduct of their duties.

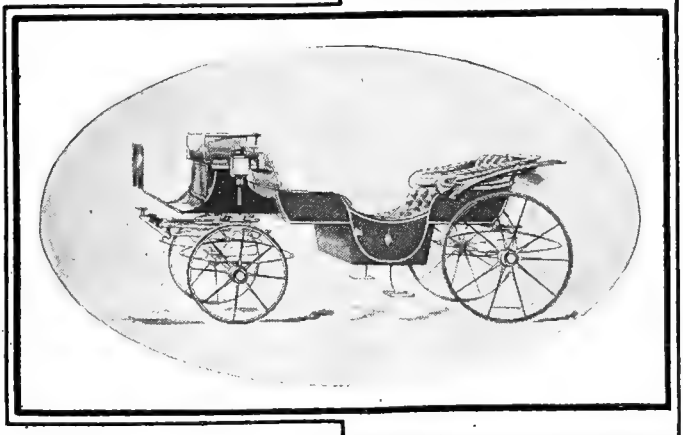
When visiting his Norfolk estate, King Edward is now invariably met at the station by a motor car, in which he is driven to Sandringham.

For a long time there was a very foolish prejudice in many people's minds against motor cars, but now, happily, the King's well-known taste for that very swift method of travelling has conquered this prejudice, and society is now to be seen enjoying a spin on its automobile.

It seems quite right that His Majesty should show the way in motoring, as in all others, and we may be assured that King Edward will never use his car in any save its proper element.



King Edward's favourite single brougham for private calls in town.



Queen Alexandra's favourite sociable for town use.

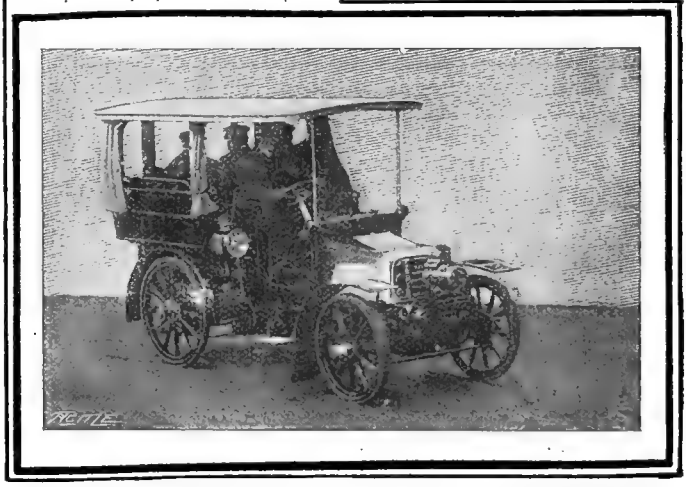


Photo by Charles Knight.

King Edward VII.'s Daimler motor car used by His Majesty at Sandringham.

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THE Mayor's speech had already lasted an unconscionable time, and even the Countess's look of interest was very forced. She was so tired of having her virtues dwelt upon and her graciousness in fulfilling the function of opening this great exhibition discussed.

"I say, Mum," whispered Gerald from behind her chair, "when this palaver is over you've promised to come round with me."

Lady Curwen nodded slightly, still keeping a smiling look on the speaker.

The Mayor continued. He was in the midst of a long list of statistics showing the city's great progress during the last half century.

"Mater," the insistent voice from behind whispered, "they say there are some quite decent things to see. Don't forget your promise."

When that list of statistics was over and another begun, showing the city's decrease of crime, again came the whisper:

"Tom Lascelles says there is a huge room full of mirrors of all sorts. We'll go there as soon as you can get away from this crowd."

At last the Mayor sat down and the audience clapped enthusiastically in their relief.

Lord Curwen made a short speech on behalf of his wife, and after being formally shown a few of the chief features of the exhibition, Lady Curwen felt she was at liberty to escape and explore the place for herself in the company of her son. Her husband continued to do his duty and listened to many explanations of many wonderful things.

"There are lots of interesting things, far nicer than this part," Gerald informed his mother. "Tom Lascelles saw through the place beforehand; his father is something on the Committee. I want to see the Indian part rather."

They wandered about for a little time, but were unable to find the Indian department or anything else interesting that they had not seen before.

"I'll just ask this workman, he'll know the way about," said Gerald. "You go straight on through that door to the right and I'll join you in a minute."

Lady Curwen obediently walked through the doorway and then another and suddenly found herself in the Hall of Mirrors.

She saw someone walking in the same direction as she was. For a moment she was startled in her surprise at seeing a duplicate of herself, identical in every way as far as she could see. Then she laughed, and, hearing footsteps close to her, she said:

"Such a joke, Gerry. I saw my reflection, and thought it was someone else. I was quite startled."

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Gerald did not answer. His mother turned round, and, to her surprise, could not see him. There was no one near, and the footsteps had ceased. Then she turned to look at her reflection again. It was not there, and, going nearer to inspect, she found that there was no glass there, as she had supposed—only a very wide corridor.

"How odd!" she thought. "I don't quite like it. I will wait for Gerald."

In a minute he joined her, with Tom Lascelles for a guide.

They explored different departments of the exhibition together, the Indian among others, and finally found themselves back in the Hall of Mirrors.

It was a large place and most bewildering. It seemed impossible to tell what was hall and what was mere reflection. One was for ever walking into a looking glass by mistake. Lady Curwen got separated from her companions during their rambles in it. Remembering her previous uncanny experience, she decided to wait for them by the main door.

It was some time before she saw them again and then they came up to her in quite a breathless condition.

"We followed you all round, Mum," explained Gerald, "and you kept disappearing, and now you have turned up here. I can't see how you got here before us, or why you wouldn't wait when we called to you."

"My dear boy, I've been here all the time, ever since I missed you. Quite a quarter of an hour."

"Then it was your ghost we were following. It is so bewildering with all these mirrors about. You hardly know which is your reflection and which is yourself. It was very queer."

"It is funny for a reflection to go about alone," added Tom Lascelles. "Do you know, I think there is something fishy about it? Perhaps we should tell someone."

"It is strange, but if we report it there will be such a fuss," said Lady Curwen. "After all, it may be just a coincidence that someone is wearing the same coloured dress." But even while she tried to reassure the boys she felt very puzzled herself and knew there was more in it than she confessed.

"Now, I'm sure we have earned some tea," she said. "You must join us, Tom."

And so they went to one of the many delightful refreshment places, and ordered tea and ices.

"Have you seen the jewels, Lady Curwen?" Tom asked, presently.

"I've seen some. I didn't think there was anything very special among them."

"Not the diamonds?"

"What diamonds?"

"There are some wonderful ones. They are so big! Quite as big as—as those things in the buckle on your belt. They aren't real, I suppose."

"Oh, no; they are only crystals."

"Well, there are some of the first water—I believe that is the proper term. I heard my father talking about them. They have a special detective to keep an eye on them. They say they are fabulously valuable."

"How interesting!" murmured Lady Curwen. "Where did you say they were?"

"In the South African department. I don't see much in diamonds myself."

"I guess you would if you were digging for them," interposed Gerald.

"They are very lovely, I think; quite the most beautiful of all stones," added Lady Curwen. "By-the-way, Gerald, I wonder where your father is."

"I saw him last looking at some dynamos."

"When we have finished you two might

"Have you seen the jewels, Lady Curwen?" Tom asked presently.

Google

go and look for him for me. Tell him to go to the big organ that is quite near the entrance. I will join him there. It really is time we left."

Tea finished, the two boys departed, and the Countess wended her way towards the South African department.

* * * * *

The Exhibition was quite a success the papers declared. The next morning they were full of the details of the opening ceremony, the well chosen words of the Countess as she performed it, the able speech of the Mayor, and, finally, the Earl's.

And then came the latest Exhibition news, evidently rushed in at the last moment. *The diamonds had been stolen!*

The Earl read his paper as usual while he was walking up and down the terrace in front of the house. On seeing this news he immediately sought his wife in her boudoir as he knew she would be interested.

"Tell me all it says about it," she said, looking up from her letters.

"It seems most strange. It appears that you went and asked to see the diamonds. You happened to ask the detective who was watching them and he showed them himself, though it was no part of his duty. You didn't say you were going to see them. I didn't know you had heard anything about them; I didn't myself until just before I got your message. I thought we could go in to see them another time."

"Tom Lascelles told me about them. Well, what else does the paper say?"

"It says how impressed you were with their beauty and how you admired them. You even took them in your hand. After your visit no one took any particular notice of them until quite late, then they were found to be false stones. The detective swears no one had been near them. I think we should go in and see about it. It is rather unpleasant that you were the last person to handle them."

"I think so too. Order the carriage and I will be ready in a few minutes."

An hour later Lord and Lady Curwen drove up to the Exhibition. They went straight to the South African department to hear all the details of the robbery from the detective in charge.

"We have come to hear your account of the diamond mystery," the Earl began.

The detective looked past him at Lady Curwen.

"I noticed no one about either before or after your ladyship's visit," the man answered. "You were the only person who had them out to look at, of course, and very few had asked to see them at all."

"Wasn't that rather extraordinary?"

"It was not generally known that they were here. It was only a day or two ago that they decided to send them."

The detective gazed at Lady Curwen all the time he was speaking in a puzzled way.

"I didn't know about them myself," continued the Earl, "until just before we left at five."

"It would be after five when you looked at them, my lady."

"Oh, no," interrupted the Earl, "Lady Curwen was with me before five and we drove away quite by five. We were at the Priory at six."

The detective looked disconcerted.

"We would like the matter cleared up," said the Earl. "At present we feel that as Lady Curwen was the last person to see the stones except, of course, the custodian of them, we have a personal interest in them. I suppose their loss will be covered by insurance."

"Where are the spurious diamonds?" asked Lady Curwen, "and who discovered the mistake?"

"The man who was showing them," explained the detective, "had to leave before the discovery was made. He knew most about them. After he left another took charge of this department."

"And you, of course, were only to watch from a distance?"

"To watch anyone whom I did not know who approached the diamonds or showed any special interest in them."

"Where are the false ones?" again asked Lady Curwen.

The detective called a man from a little distance, explained who the visitors were, and their wish to see the false stones.

"They are in the case just as they were found waiting for the insurance people's inspection. We are expecting them any minute," the man answered, and handed the case to them.

It was a small Russian leather case with a dark velvet lining. Lady Curwen opened it. Then she examined it carefully, and, touching a small spring, she took the false bottom of the case out.

"See!" she exclaimed. "There are the real diamonds!"

The diamonds lay sparkling and glittering

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as the light fell upon them in the bottom of the case.

The men looked at the Countess in amazement.

"Yes," she laughed, "when you hear from the man who had charge of them about twenty minutes to five"—here she looked at the detective—"he will tell you how he explained the double box to me."

"But who put the diamonds on the lower tray and the paste above?" asked the detective in surprise.

"That you should know," continued Lady Curwen. "But both the original keeper of the jewels and my husband know that I looked at them before ten minutes to five."

"And I——"

"You were not there at the time. Now the diamonds are safe, we need not trouble you any further. Good-morning."

Lord and Lady Curwen drove away at once.

"And the explanation?" the Earl asked when they were again alone.

"Weren't they a good imitation?" Lady Curwen answered irrelevantly. "They must have been specially made. My mysterious double, who looked at the diamonds in the presence of the detective, was seen both by me and the boys. Of course I had guessed who she was, because who but an accomplice of Thérese, my maid, could know what I intended to wear?"

Her husband joined in her laugh.

"To continue my story, when I heard about the diamonds I imagined they must be her quarry and guessed her plan.

"I tried to find her, but it was impossible in the few minutes I had, and I was afraid that any moment she might perpetrate her crime. In desperation I went to the man in charge with the intention of communicating my suspicions to him.

"He, of course, knew who I was, and when I entered the department he showed me round with great avidity. The diamonds he specially pointed out, and explained the working of the double tray. I chatted with him a little longer, until he was called away to the other side of his department. I then carried out my plan, and rapidly put the real diamonds below, and the crystals, which I had taken out of my buckle (it was Tom Lascelles who gave me that idea), I put on the top tray.

"See!" she exclaimed. "There are the real diamonds!"

"The rest of the story you will have already guessed. Charlotte, my former maid, you know, had prepared a false set of stones with the intention of substituting them for the real ones. But what happened after all was that she took my crystals instead, and left her false set on the top tray, the real stones being safely out of sight."

"I admit it was most ingenious," said the Earl; "but was it worth the risk to yourself?"

"There was little risk. I could not ruin the woman, Charles. Her boy and Gerald were babies together."

The Earl smiled as he kissed her. He understood.

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CAP AND BELLS

FIRST BURGLAR (cautiously producing a package from his coat): "Mate, we're in luck. I bagged a duck from the shop round the corner."

GOODMAN GONRONG: "You silly fool! I've got to go out now an' pinch a bottle o' champagne!"

* * * * *

MRS. UPPISH: "Just think, it's only six months ago since we moved away from next door to you. We're in a much better neighbourhood now."

MRS. SHARPE: "So are we."

MRS. UPPISH: "Why, where did you move?"

MRS. SHARPE: "Oh, we haven't moved at all."

* * * * *

HER FATHER: "No, young man, I shall never consent to your marriage with my daughter."

YOUNG MAN: "Ah, how can I live without the dear girl?"

HER FATHER: "Well, if it is absolutely necessary that your existence be prolonged you might hunt up a job and go to work."

MRS. NURITCH: "I want a pair of the most expensive gloves you've got."

SALESMAN: "Yes'm. Do you want them long?"

MRS. NURITCH: "Don't be impertinent, sir. I want to buy them, not hire them."

* * *

EDITOR: "Why do you say: 'He ran into the police station, puffing and blowing?' 'Puffing' and 'blowing' are synonymous."

REPORTER: "Not at all. There's a vast difference, for instance, between puffing a man up and blowing him up."

* * * * *

TOO EASY.

"Does your father have to pay much for coal?"

"Not a penny. He lives near the railway lines and makes faces at the engine drivers of all trains that pass."

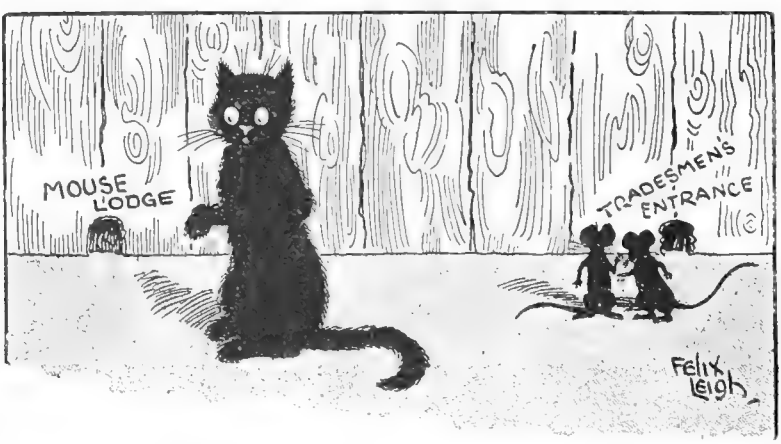
* * * * *

"John," said the doctor's wife, "my tongue looks very bad this morning."

"Ah!" exclaimed the doctor, "overwork, no doubt."

"But, really, I am not overworked. You know that ——"

"I was not referring to you, but your tongue."



Mr. Nibbles: "Of course, it's rather annoying, my dear, but as that stupid cat persists in watching the front door, I suppose we'll have to go in by the tradesmen's entrance."

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1. Piano.

2 Forte.

3. Fortissimo.

4. Smashissimo.

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Such Forethought.

Hewitt: "Is your life insured for the benefit of your wife?"

Jewett: "No, I don't believe in doing business in a roundabout way, and so I had the policy made payable to her second husband."

* *

At the Novel Play.

He: "I suppose, before seeing one of these plays one should read the book."

She: "Yes. Then, in some cases, one might avoid the play."

* * * * *

A SENSITIVE ROD.

Jacko: "Hooray! I can *feel* a bite!"

Young Lady: "A friend of mine is engaged to a man, and now he refuses to marry her. What would you advise her to do?"

A little girl was discovered whispering in school, and the teacher asked sharply:

"What were you saying to the girl next to you when I caught you whispering?"

The little culprit hung her head for a moment, and then replied:

"I was only telling her how nice you looked in your new dress."

"Well, that—yes—I know—the class in spelling will please stand up."

Old Lawyer: "Is the man wealthy?"

Young Lady: "No. He hasn't a penny."

Old Lawyer: "Then I'd advise her to write him a nice letter of thanks."

* * * * *

Tackled the Wrong Boy.

Mother: "What! Have you been fighting again, Johnnie? Good little boys don't fight."

Johnnie: "Yes, I know that. I thought he was a good little boy, but after I hit him once, I found he wasn't."

Courtship too Expensive.

Tess: "You don't mean to say that they have broken off their engagement?"

Jess: "Yes."

Tess: "Why, I thought they were perfectly devoted to each other."

Jess: "So they are. You see, they have broken off the engagement so that he may save enough money to enable them to get married."

* * * * *

Little Teddy (to mamma, who is cutting papa's hair): "Mamma, may I take one of papa's curls?"

Mamma: "Yes, darling." (To papa): "See what an affectionate angel that little fellow is. Even at his tender age he knows enough to prize the mere curl on his dear papa's head."

Little Teddy (as he sees mamma trying to pick him a good specimen): "Hurry mamma, I want it for a new tail for my horse."

* * * * *

ALAS!

Among a heap of odds and ends
Within my study cupboard lying—
Reminders of forgotten friends
And days when life was not so trying—

I found a little crumpled mass
Of kid, long-wristed, slender-fingered,
Whereon, as though it could not pass,
A fragrance like a mem'ry lingered.

And somehow I forgot my age
And all the worries incidental
To married life, and turned love's page
Back to a chapter sentimental.

"Ah, glove!" I sighed, "the dainty hand
That you for one gay night d'd cover
Might still with tender touch command
The homage of an ardent lover!

"I'll give you back to her, and watch
Her eyes light up, her cheeks grow ruddy;
And she'll forget to darn and patch,
And I'll make love within my study!"

And then she came! . . . I'm wondering
What Tommy made this awful hole with. . . .
What's that? An old glove! . . . Just the thing
For Jane to lift the lumps of coal with!

J. J. Bell.

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By Hy. LEONARD.

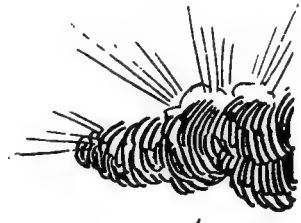
JACK RED was made of gingerbread,
So was Jane Pop herself;
Jane Pop lived in a lolly shop,
Beside Jack on the shelf.

Said Jack, "I love you, Jane, I do,
Don't question that I'm true;
Because, Jane Pop, the question, dear,
I fain would pop to you."

Said Jane, "Now Jack! what have you said,
Oh, can this really be!

Your gallant heart of gingerbread
Is beating all for me?"

Said Jack, "Though many girls are sweet,
Aye, sweet as honey dew,



There's not another in this shop,
That's half so sweet as you."

So out they went on marriage bent,
And, very sad to say,
The twain were both caught in the rain
And melted quite away.

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TO MY RIVAL.

Before we met he loved you well, I know,
But we were wed,
With vows that he was wholly mine,
'Twas lightly said.

Last night I watched you. Back into his life
You dared to creep:
He gazed upon you, and his eyes bespoke
Affection deep.

I stood apart, but from the shadow dim,
I saw him press
His lips upon you—lips that had touched mine
In fond caress.

Though I'm forgotten, brief as passing clouds
Your triumphs are—
Each moment draws you nearer to your end,
Cheeky cigar.

* * * * *

MISTRESS: "Bridget, did you hear me call?"

BRIDGET: "Yis, mum; but ye towld me the ither day not to answer ye back, and I didn't."

* * * * *

CAUGHT ON THE FLY.

"I'll marry whom I please," said she,
And tossed her little head.
"Hurrah! You're mine! For certainly
You do please me," he said.

PAT: "Oi was born in '68, an' a lucky t'ing it was fur me."

BRYAN: "Was it so? Phwhy?"

PAT: "Well, ye see the twinty-ninth av February is me birthday, an' so if '68 hadn't been a lape year Oi wudn't a' been born at aal, at all."

* * * * *

Said a little lawyer the other day: "There is a little restaurant in Fleet Street where I can get twenty-four kinds of meat and vegetables for eightpence."

"How do you do that?" asked a friend.

"I order hash."

Old Lady: "Dear, dear! I don't like to see a little boy smoking a cigarette."

The Boy: "Don't y', ma'am? Well, if y'll come round this way at the same time t'morrer I'll try to be smokin' a cigar 'r a pipe."

Mother: "Quarrelling with cousin Jane? Jack, how can you?"

Jack (who has just been vaccinated): "I was told to take her down to dinner. But I don't consider she's safe. She tells me she has only been vaccinated once—years ago, when she was young."

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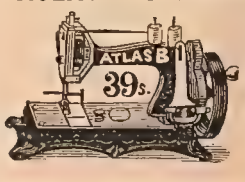

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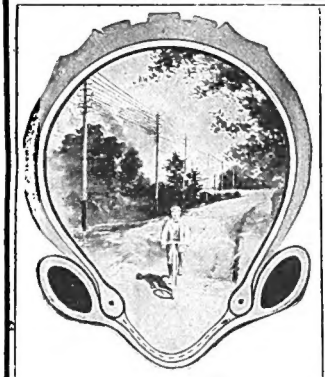

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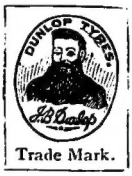

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